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Amir welcomes new ambassadors



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received the credentials of three new ambassadors to the country at his office in the Amiri Diwan yesterday. Here he is seen receiving the credentials of Turkiye envoy Yakup Caymazoglu. His Highness the Amir welcomed the new ambassadors, wishing them continued success in carrying out their duties, and further development and growth in bilateral relations between Qatar and their respective countries. For their part, the ambassadors conveyed to the Amir the greetings of their countries' leaders, along with their wishes for continued development and growth for Qatar and its people. The ambassadors were accorded official reception ceremonies upon arrival at the Amiri Diwan. **(QNA)**

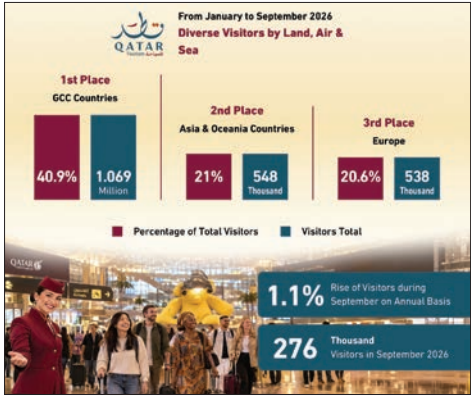
Amir meets Iranian minister, delegation



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met in his office at the Amiri Diwan yesterday with Iranian Minister of Interior Eskandar Momeni and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his visit to the country. They discussed developments in the region and ongoing de-escalation efforts to strengthen security and regional and international stability. HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi attended the meeting. **(QNA)**

Qatar hosts 2.614mn visitors in first nine months of 2026

Qatar welcomed 2.614mn visitors through its land, air and sea entry points during the first nine months of 2026. In a statement yesterday, Qatar Tourism said that the number of visitors to Qatar rose 1.1% year-on-year in September to 276,000, compared with 273,000 in the same month last year. The statement said visitor sources varied between January and September 2026. The Gulf Co-operation Council countries ranked first, accounting for 40.9% of total visitors, or 1.069mn. Asia and Oceania ranked second, accounting for 21%, with 548,000 visitors. Europe ranked third with 538,000 visitors, or 20.6% of the total, while the Americas ranked fourth, accounting for 7.3%, with 190,000 visitors. Other Arab countries ranked fifth, with 184,000 visitors, representing 7% of the total. Other African countries ranked sixth, with 84,000 visitors, or about 3.2% of the total. **(QNA)**



Qatar-US-Iran diplomatic efforts ongoing: MoFA

Qatar condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia; Qatar too early to join Makkah alliance: al-Hashemi

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar's mediation efforts between the United States and Iran are continuing without interruption, stressed Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashemi, director of the Media and Communication Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), yesterday.

Speaking during the ministry's weekly media briefing, al-Hashemi said the mediation efforts aim to achieve progress that can serve as a basis for further negotiations and address all issues of concern to both sides.

"Talks are continuing, and there is an exchange of messages between Washington and Tehran, with Qatar acting as a mediator between the parties," al-Hashemi said, stressing that resolving the dispute requires making every effort to reach negotiable solutions while consid-



Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashemi at the MoFA media briefing yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

ering the concerns of all parties.

Regarding the issue of the Iranian pilots, al-Hashemi said Qatar had been clear from the start that it had addressed the matter and informed the Iranian side of the latest developments. However, he noted that Qatar remains open to an Iranian visit to review the procedures taken in this regard.

In the meantime, al-Hashemi pointed out that Qatar supports

any initiatives undertaken by regional countries to safeguard their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the "Makkah Alliance," indicating that the alliance would strengthen regional co-operation aimed at preserving the capabilities and stability of countries in the region. He also reiterated Qatar's support for Saudi Arabia in all measures it takes to protect its security and territorial integrity.

"We condemn the irresponsible approach adopted by the Houthi group in targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Islamic holy sites and civilian objects, and we support the kingdom in all measures it takes to preserve its security and territorial integrity," he said.

Accordingly, al-Hashemi reaffirmed Qatar's support for any move that contributes to maintaining the security and stability of the region, while noting that it was too early to discuss Qatar joining the "Makkah Alliance."

IOC confirms Qatar as interested party to host 2036 Olympic Games

Qatar has been confirmed as an interested party to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Revealing the next steps in the 2036 bid process, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) published a handbook for potential hosts, along with the confirmed



Fatima al-Kuwari, CEO of the Doha 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Bid Committee.

list of interested parties hoping to make it through each stage of a revised selection process. Welcoming the confirmation, Fatima al-Kuwari, CEO of the Doha 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Bid Committee, said: "It is no secret that Qatar has shown an ambition to bid for the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Today that ambition has been justified by the IOC's confirmation that Qatar has been named as an interested party. "This is just the beginning of a long journey in which we hope to build on Qatar's proven track record of hosting major international events. We believe Doha 2036 would offer a future-ready model for the Games that is athlete-centred, connected, accessible and designed to ensure that sport and society emerge stronger long after 2036. "This is a unique opportunity to celebrate sporting excellence, culture and human connection, bringing the Olympic and Paralympic Games to a new region. We are excited by the journey." **Sport Page 1**

Agentic AI could fundamentally change how govts deliver public services: expert

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Artificial intelligence (AI) is entering a new phase in which systems are moving beyond generating information and recommendations to taking actions on behalf of users and potentially policymakers, according to a leading expert in digital policy and AI. Speaking on the topic of 'Agentic AI, Digital Policy and the Future of Public Governance', at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Dr Hasnain Bokhari, head of Digital Policy and Artificial Intelligence at Willy Brandt School of Public Policy at the University of Erfurt, Germany, said that the shift from 'AI that advises to AI that acts' could fundamentally change how governments deliver public services and how accountability is established. "Unlike conventional genera-

tive AI, which primarily produces text, summarises information or offers recommendations, agentive or agentic AI can be assigned a task and independently carry out a sequence of actions to complete it," noted Dr Bokhari.

Dr Bokhari spoke about the rapid emergence of agentic and autonomous AI systems and how it is transforming public governance. He discussed the opportunities these technologies create for improving public services, decision-making and administrative efficiency, while also examining the regulatory, ethical and accountability challenges they raise.

"Governments have spent decades digitising public services, with e-government initiatives promising citizens access to services around the clock through computers and mobile devices. But the expansion of digital government also exposed problems involving Internet access,



Dr Hasnain Bokhari.

affordability and technological infrastructure, particularly in developing countries," he explained.

Those challenges, according to Dr Bokhari, contributed to the recognition of the digital divide and encouraged governments to develop multi-channel approaches to public service delivery rather than relying exclusively on websites and smartphones. He said that the emergence of AI

has introduced a new governance challenge. "In conventional e-government, technology was largely treated as a software tool and governance focused on systems and infrastructure. With AI, technology increasingly functions as an adviser, while questions of fairness, bias and other aspects become central," he pointed out.

With agentive AI, Dr Bokhari said, the technology becomes something different: a delegated actor.

"Administrative law already contains extensive principles governing the delegation of authority to human officials. Those principles could provide a foundation for governing AI agents that are granted authority to perform tasks on behalf of public institutions," he explained. According to him, some questions policymakers should ask are: What is the AI agent's mandate; what systems and information is it authorised to

access? Who is responsible for its actions? At what point must the agent obtain human permission? And who is accountable if an autonomous action causes harm?

"These questions become particularly important because an AI agent can potentially perform multiple actions over time rather than simply producing a single recommendation," he highlighted. The official stated that the discussion comes as governments explore increasingly ambitious applications of AI.

"Governments are seeking greater efficiency and responsiveness through AI while simultaneously having to determine how much autonomy these systems should be given. The emergence of systems capable of independently acting raises the question of whether additional governance mechanisms will be necessary," he highlighted.

Despite the risks, Bokhari iden-

tified significant potential benefits from agentive AI in government.

He stated: "One is the development of agent-ready government infrastructure capable of supporting civil servants and delivering services organised around citizens' life events rather than individual government departments. Such systems could co-ordinate activities across agencies automatically, reducing the burden on citizens who currently have to navigate multiple departments to complete a single task."

For Bokhari, the transition to agentive AI represents more than another stage in technological modernisation. "It is a shift in the relationship between technology, government authority and citizens. The key distinction is no longer simply between humans and machines, but between AI that recommends an action and AI that is authorised to take one," he underlined.



Amir receives credentials of new envoys



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received the credentials of three new ambassadors to the country at his office in the Amiri Diwan yesterday. HH the Amir received the credentials of Türkiye's ambassador Yakup Caymazoglu, Cyprus's ambassador Elpidoforos Economou and Malawi's ambassador Twaib Abdullah Ali. Pictured are HH the Amir receiving the credentials of Economou and Ali. The envoys were accorded official reception ceremonies upon arrival at the Amiri Diwan. - **QNA**



Minister of Interior meets Iranian counterpart



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with Iran's Minister of Interior Eskandar Momeni. The meeting discussed topics of mutual interest, particularly in the security field, as well as joint efforts to promote stability and safeguard international peace and security amid current regional challenges. - **QNA**

Minister holds meeting with Spanish official

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday in Madrid with Spain's State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs Diego Martinez Belio. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to enhance it, regional developments, and topics of mutual interest. - **QNA**

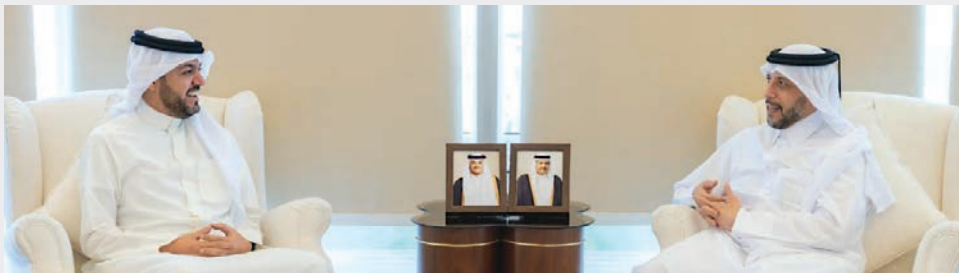
MSDF launches digital platform for private bodies

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF) has launched an electronic platform dedicated to managing private associations and institutions, as part of Qatar's digital transformation initiatives and to upgrade services provided to entities registered under Decree-Law No. (21) of 2020. The platform streamlines procedures into a single electronic system to accelerate transactions and improve user experience. It covers various administrative stages, including foundation and licensing (issuance and renewal), membership management, general assembly meeting requests, as well as notifications for events and submission of activity reports. The director of the MSDF's Private Associations and Institutions Department, Abdullah Mohammad al-Hajri, said that this platform simplifies administrative workflows and enhances operational efficiency, supporting civil society organisations within an integrated digital government system. - **QNA**

Qatar Charity, Zanzibar govt sign agreement

Qatar Charity (QC), through its branch in Tanzania, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the First Vice-President's Office of Zanzibar to strengthen co-operation in implementing humanitarian and development initiatives for persons with disabilities. The partnership aims to empower them, promote their social and economic inclusion, and improve their quality of life. The MoU was signed by acting QC country director in Tanzania Syed Shujaat Ali Shah and Permanent Secretary at the First Vice-President's Office of Zanzibar Maryam Juma Abdulla. The MoU establishes a framework for developing and implementing programmes and projects in humanitarian assistance, social welfare, livelihoods, economic empowerment, accessibility, capacity building, and community awareness. It also lays the foundation for future joint initiatives and projects across the islands. Under its "Ibsar" Initiative, Qatar Charity implemented a specialised eye care and surgery campaign in Zanzibar, benefiting almost 3,900 people, distributed more than 415 prescription eyeglasses, and performed 404 cataract surgeries. - **QNA**

Minister meets Kuwaiti ambassador



HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud met yesterday with Kuwait's ambassador to Qatar Ahmed Abdulrahman al-Shuraim. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to further strengthen and enhance co-operation in the health sector.

Deputy prime minister meets Namibia's defence minister



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met yesterday with Namibia's Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs Frans Kapofi during his visit to Qatar. They discussed issues of mutual interest and ways to strengthen and expand them. - **QNA**

Al-Ansari highlights resilience, regional security at GUQ session

HE the Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari has underscored the importance of strengthening resilience and preparedness, enhancing national capabilities and deepening regional co-operation to build a broader and more resilient security architecture capable of addressing emerging challenges. He made the remarks during a discussion on "GCC Security: Alliances, Threats, and Strategic Choices", organised by Georgetown University Qatar (GUQ)'s Centre for International and Regional Studies. - **QNA**

Qatar Tourism backs Qatari talent to drive culinary sector growth

Qatar Tourism (QT) is stepping up efforts to develop the country's restaurant and culinary sector by supporting Qatari entrepreneurs, promoting local talent and encouraging innovation, Chief of Operations Affairs Omar Abdulrahman al-Jaber said at the second session of the "Taste of Qatar: Spotlight on Qatari Entrepreneurs" programme.

"The culinary sector is a genuine expression of Qatar's identity, culture and time-honoured hospitality, as well as a vital economic sector with promising opportunities for growth and investment," al-Jaber said. "To this end, we are building an integrated ecosystem that supports the sector's development and instils a culture of excellence through initiatives and programmes that raise quality and service standards and enable business owners to develop distinctive, competitive experiences that attract visitors," he added.

Held in the presence of HE the QT Chairman Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, the event brought together Qatari entrepreneurs and chefs to exchange insights, share experiences and explore opportunities to advance the restaurant and hospitality sector.



Qatar Tourism's al-Jaber speaking during the session.

"Qatari restaurants and brands also play an important role in shaping the destination's story and offering visitors authentic experiences that embody our culture and identity and reflect the wealth of tourism, heritage and cultural assets Qatar has to offer," al-Jaber said.

Visit Qatar public relations and Communications director Jassim al-Mahmoud said the session provided a platform for dialogue and highlighted creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the restaurant and culinary arts sector.

"With this session, we wanted to create a rich space for dialogue and the exchange

of views, and to highlight stories of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the restaurant and culinary arts sector," he said. "Taste of Qatar, which we launched last year, reinforces this approach by celebrating excellence, encouraging innovation and establishing high-quality standards, helping to elevate the restaurant and hospitality sector and strengthen Qatar's position as a global culinary destination."

The event featured two panel discussions. The first examined the journeys of Qatari entrepreneurs, including their success stories, challenges and efforts to turn innovative ideas into successful and scalable businesses.

Participants were Flat White Specialty Coffee founder and chief executive Maryam al-Badr, Inbat Group founder and chief executive Ghanim al-Sulaiti, The Espresso Collective and InStudio Club founder and creative director Nouf al-Haidous, MA Group chairman Abdulla al-Emadi, and Ajlan al-Kaabi, founder of Athar Café, Haql Café and Palladium.

The second panel, "Qatari Talent", explored the role of Qatari chefs in preserving the authenticity of local cuisine while embracing contemporary approaches and innovative techniques.

Chefs Aisha al-Tamimi, Mohammed al-Abdulla, Noor al-Mazroei and Salman Jaida shared their experiences, including international visitors' responses to Qatari flavours and the role of food in fostering cultural connections.

The Taste of Qatar initiative is part of the QT's efforts to strengthen the culinary offering as an integral component of the visitor experience, while providing a platform to showcase local talent, homegrown brands and Qatar's distinctive flavours, culture and hospitality.

See also Page 6

Qatar, ITU sign host country agreement for 2026 conference

Qatar, represented by the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA), is preparing to host the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26), to be held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) on November 9-27.

Around 3,000 participants are expected, including high-level dignitaries from ITU's 194 member states, as well as representatives from industry and academia.

As part of the preparations to host the conference, Qatar and the ITU signed the Host Country

Agreement for the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference, marking a key milestone in preparations for the conference in Doha.

The agreement sets out the framework and arrangements required for hosting the conference, helping to ensure the appropriate conditions for its proceedings with the participation of member states and relevant stakeholders from around the world, and supporting its organisation to the highest standards, in line with the conference's significance and importance.

"The signing of the Host Country Agreement marks a key mile-



stone in Qatar's preparations to host PP-26 and reflects the country's strong commitment to providing the necessary resources to ensure the success of this major global event," said CRA president Eng. Ahmad bin Abdulla al-Mus-

lemani, who is also the Chair-Designate of ITU PP-26.

"We look forward to welcoming the global telecommunications community to Doha and leading the work of the conference with a vision that fosters co-operation

SJC, General Tax Authority sign pact

The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) and General Tax Authority have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening institutional integration between the two entities and developing electronic connectivity procedures.

The MoU was signed by HE the President of the Court of Appeal Judge Dr Mohammed Imran Ali al-Kuwari, representing the SJC, and General Tax Authority assistant president (Support Services) Ismail Mohammed al-Sayed al-Mansouri in the pres-

ence of HE the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation Dr Hassan bin Lahdan al-Hasan al-Muhannadi and HE the President of the General Tax Authority Khalifa bin Jassim al-Jaham al-Kuwari.

In a statement, the authority said the MoU will contribute to enhancing procedural efficiency, expediting the completion of transactions and supporting the work of judicial committees with joint jurisdiction, including the Tax Grievance Committee. - **QNA**





Mada launches ‘Taqqdeer’ as unified digital reference for senior citizens services

Qatar Assistive Technology Center (Mada) launched yesterday the “Taqqdeer” platform, under the patronage and in the presence of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family, Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi.

Taqqdeer platform was developed to provide a unified, reliable digital reference consolidating information on services, programmes, initiatives, and benefits available to senior citizens in the State of Qatar, thereby assisting them, their families, and their caregivers in identifying available options and accessing the relevant service providers in an easier and more efficient way.

The platform aggregates information across nine areas, including health and care, life-long learning, social protection, socio-economic empowerment, mobility and transport, assistive technology, access to justice, cultural and recreational activities (including sports), and emergency services and hotlines, to deliver a digital experience that addresses the diverse needs of users. The platform was also developed in accordance with global digital accessibility standards to ensure content is easy to perceive, navigate, and interact with.

HE al-Nuaimi said in a speech that the State of Qatar places people and families at the forefront of its priorities and at the heart of its development plans. In line with this approach, the Ministry of Social Development and Family’s strategy for 2025-2030, under the theme “From Care to Empowerment”, was introduced to affirm that quality of life is not limited to providing protection and care, but also extends to



participation, independence, and the ability to benefit from opportunities and services.

Senior citizens hold a central place in this approach, which focuses on ensuring an active and dignified life for them, enhancing their contributions to society, and developing services that meet their needs and aspirations while valuing the wealth of experience and accumulated knowledge they possess, which are assets of great importance to both the family and the community, she added.

With the acceleration of digital transformation in service provision, ease of access to information has become an essential part of empowerment, she noted, pointing out that clear and reliable information allows one to know the options available to them, make the appropriate decision, and benefit from services with ease and confidence.

HE al-Nuaimi highlighted the importance of the Taqqdeer platform as a unified source of information regarding services, programmes, and initiatives available to senior citizens, pointing out that it facilitates access for them and their families and caregivers, while bringing opportunities for care, learning and participation within closer reach. **(QNA)**

QCS’ ‘Heroes Series’ celebrates childhood cancer survivors

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) launched the “Heroes Series” as part of its “Our Children Are Gold” programme at an event at KidZania Doha, featuring two childhood cancer survivors, Mohammed and Lin. The initiative forms part of QCS’ ongoing efforts to support children living with cancer and highlight their inspiring stories and experiences.

The “Heroes Series” provides a platform to celebrate childhood cancer survivors and let them share their stories and experiences with the community. Through these stories, the initiative aims to spread hope and foster a culture of community support for children living with cancer and their families.

During the event, Mohammed and Lin shared aspects of their experiences with cancer and their journeys to recovery in an engaging and interactive setting designed to highlight children’s strength and resilience in overcoming challenges. The series carries the message: “Because every hero has a story worth telling”.

The initiative falls under QCS’ “Our Children Are Gold” programme, which reflects the Society’s commitment to supporting children living with cancer and childhood cancer survivors. Through the programme, QCS continues to introduce initiatives and activities that strengthen



psychosocial and community support for children and their families, while also raising public awareness of childhood cancers.

Amal Bani Hammad, community psychologist at QCS, emphasised that sharing stories of recovery is an important way to inspire hope and highlight positive role models within the community. She noted that such stories also help challenge misconceptions surrounding cancer and encourage children and their families to continue their treatment and recovery journey with a positive outlook.

She added that QCS remains committed to developing initiatives and programmes dedicated to cancer survivors, in line with its vision of creating “a cancer-aware community and a better life for people affected by cancer.”

Bani Hammad further emphasised that community partnerships are a key pillar in supporting QCS’ efforts and ensuring the sustainability of its initiatives.

Minister opens conference and exhibition on recycling

6th Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition convenes in Doha

The sixth Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition 2026 kicked off in Doha yesterday.

The two-day event is organised by the Ministry of Municipality, drawing broad participation from government and quasi-government entities, private-sector institutions, local and international companies, as well as leading experts, specialists, and decision-makers in recycling, sustainability, and the circular economy.

The opening ceremony was attended by ministers, ministry undersecretaries, ambassadors, assistant undersecretaries, and senior officials, along with representatives of government entities and national institutions, as well as a wide range of experts, specialists, and partners from Qatar and abroad.

In his opening remarks, HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah said the conference and exhibition represent a national platform that brings together government entities, the private sector, academic and research institutions, and experts to share knowledge, showcase innovative solutions, and forge partnerships that support the future of recycling and sustainability in the State of Qatar.

These efforts, he underlined, will help advance the transition toward a circular economy and accelerate sustainable development.

HE al-Attiyah highlighted that the State of Qatar has made a substantial leap forward in this sector, with 45% of municipal solid waste diverted from landfills during 2025, while the Waste Treatment Center



generated more than 276,000 megawatt-hours of electricity.

He affirmed that the centre also processed more than 10,000 tonnes of scrap tires, produced more than 34,000 tonnes of compost, and sorted and recovered more than 37,000 tonnes of recyclable materials. Meanwhile, the production of recycled construction materials at Rawdat Rashed reached approximately 3.9mn tonnes during the same year.

He highlighted the ministry’s efforts to strengthen the role of the private sector and develop recycling industries, noting that the number of facilities designated for recycling industries in the Al Afja area increased to 61, including 29 operational facilities, 19 facilities under construction, and 13 facilities in the development phase.

Al-Attiyah said sustainability is no longer an additional option but has become a fundamental pillar of planning for the future and a key driver of economic efficiency, resource protection, and improved quality of life.

He noted that a successful transition to a circular economy



requires the co-ordinated efforts of government, the private sector, academic and research institutions, and the community, turning ideas into projects, technologies into applications, and partnerships into tangible results.

The conference also featured the signing of lease agreements with four of the nine investors selected under the investment opportunities offered by the ministry to establish new projects in the recycling industries on land designated for this purpose. The agreements mark a significant step in the ministry’s efforts to turn investment opportunities into tangible projects, strengthen private-sector participation, and expand the industrial base associated with recycling and the circular economy.

The signing also marks the completion of procedures related to the investment opportunities offered by the ministry.

Alongside the conference, a specialised exhibition is being held featuring government entities, national institutions, local and global companies, and specialised manufacturing facilities.

The exhibition showcases advanced technologies, products, services, and innovative solutions in the fields of recycling and sustainability, contributing to enhanced knowledge sharing, the development of partnerships, and the growth of industries associated with the circular economy.

The conference reflects the ministry’s commitment to continuing to advance sustainable materials management, encouraging investment in recycling industries, and strengthening partnerships with the private sector and academic and research institutions, into line with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 and NDS3. **(QNA)**

Waste to wealth: New technologies target Qatar’s green economy

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Qatar could unlock new revenue streams from waste through technologies that convert food scraps and biomass into compost and alternative fuels, as green solutions gain importance in the country’s sustainability drive. Speaking to Gulf Times on the sidelines of the sixth Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition, organised by the Ministry of Municipality, Katina Aghayan, CEO of Kingdom Konsultate, highlighted the potential of waste-to-fuel technologies, clean biodiesel and smart recycling systems to reduce emissions while creating economic opportunities. Kingdom Konsultate is a specialised consultancy that works on sustainability strategies, climate technology, and solutions to tackle greenwashing. Aghayan said the company has worked with Qatar’s municipal sector for more than six years, introducing technologies that support the country’s environmental objectives. “We do end-to-end solutions. We’re the only one in the region that does strategies, and we also have

an arm in technology for climate tech,” she said. Aghayan said one key area the company was promoting was converting biomass waste into alternative energy, including biofuel, biodiesel and bio-LNG. In her conference presentation, titled around the concept of “waste to fuel”, she planned to explore how waste could be transformed into a valuable resource rather than becoming an environmental burden. She also highlighted the potential to scale up green industries and develop commercial models that make sustainability financially viable. “How we can take this very rich biomass that we have as waste and turn it into a revenue stream and reduce pollution in the environment,” she said, describing the opportunity. Aghayan also revealed that Kingdom Konsultate had signed an exclusive partnership with a Saudi partner to introduce B100, a 100% biodiesel product intended to support decarbonisation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Another technology attracting attention at the exhibition is CompoBot, a Hungarian



Katina Aghayan

innovation introduced to the Qatari and wider Middle Eastern markets through Kingdom Konsultate’s exclusive partnership. The robotic system processes food waste into compost while allowing users to monitor their environmental impact. “What it does actually is recycle the food, and it turns it into compost,” Aghayan said. The system can also communicate with users and track how much waste and emissions have been reduced. Its mobile application allows the technology to be used in settings including homes, offices and lounges. Beyond food-waste management, Aghayan said the company was

introducing solutions in water recycling, microalgae, biofuel production and emissions reduction, working with public and private sector organisations. She said these technologies aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly its environmental sustainability objectives.

“We are trying to really help our public sector and private sector to achieve the Qatar National Vision 2030,” she said.

Aghayan also stressed the importance of collaborating with government bodies, including the Ministry of Municipality and the Ministry of Environment, to advance sustainable practices. For Qatar, the opportunity lies not only in reducing the amount of waste sent for disposal, but also in treating waste as a resource that can support alternative energy, lower environmental impacts and create new economic value. As sustainability technologies develop, initiatives such as those showcased by Kingdom Konsultate underline the growing focus on practical solutions that connect environmental responsibility with commercially viable outcomes.

Shafallah Center hosts innovative projects exhibition

Al Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with the Qatar Scientific Club (QSC), organised an exhibition showcasing the winning projects from the “Shafallah Hackathon” to mark World Cerebral Palsy Day. The event aims to leverage technological solutions to improve the quality of life, independence, and social integration of individuals with disabilities. The exhibition highlighted four winning projects out of eight submitted by high school and university students, selected based on innovation, feasibility, and social impact. Executive Director of Al Shafallah Center Fatima Said al-Saadi stated that the initiative reinforces social and technological innovation aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. Meanwhile, Director



of Administrative and Financial Affairs at QSC, Fatima al-Mohannadi, emphasised their role in evaluating, refining, and developing these

prototypes into scalable, sustainable solutions, while attracting institutional supporters and corporate sponsors. **(QNA)**

HOPE Qatar achieves ‘Excellent’ rating in MoEHE’s quality assurance audit

HOPE Qatar Centre for Persons with Disabilities has achieved an outstanding “Excellent” rating with an overall score of 98% following the Quality Assurance Accreditation Audit conducted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in the last week of September.

The achievement places HOPE Qatar Centre as an ‘A Grade’ provider of educational services to persons with disabilities in Qatar, marking a significant milestone in the Centre’s continued commitment to quality, inclusion, professional excellence, and the delivery of high-quality educational and training services.

The comprehensive evaluation assessed HOPE Qatar Centre across five key quality assurance areas: Leadership and Manage-

ment; Human and Physical Resources; Educational and Training Environment; Monitoring and Evaluation; and Local and International Partnerships. The Centre achieved a full score of 21 out of 21 in Leadership and Management, reflecting effective dissemination of its vision and mission, strategic planning, and policy implementation. In Human and Physical Resources, HOPE achieved 21 out of 21, recognising its human resources policies, administrative structure, learning resources, and professional development practices.

The centre also achieved a perfect 24 out of 24 in Educational and Training Environment, with the assessment covering classroom suitability, accessibility facilities for individuals with disabilities, health and safety com-



pliance, and the implementation of modern training programs and AI applications. In Monitoring and Evaluation, HOPE achieved 10 out of 11, reflecting its program evaluation mechanisms, data-driven tracking systems, and implementation of Individualised Educa-

tion Plans (IEPs). The Centre also received a perfect score of 9 out of 9 in Local and International Partnerships, recognising its efforts to address societal needs and its active collaboration with local and international institutions.

The Excellent rating also brings

significant recognition and opportunities for the Centre, including a Certificate of Excellence in Evaluation and Quality Accreditation from MoEHE, recognition from the Private Education Affairs Sector of the Ministry for quality practices, and nomination to work with the Ministry on strategic projects.

The Centre may also be nominated to engage with various ministries and governmental and semi-governmental institutions in Qatar to provide programs that support transferring expertise to the local community. These opportunities further strengthen HOPE Qatar Centre’s role in contributing its experience and expertise to Qatar’s wider disability and education sector.

Dr Rajeev Thomas, founder and chief mentor of HOPE Qatar Cen-

tre, expressed his appreciation to every member of the HOPE team whose commitment and efforts contributed to the successful outcome.

The accreditation reflects the HOPE Qatar team’s collective commitment to maintaining high standards across every aspect of its work, from leadership and administration to education, training, safety, evaluation, professional development, and partnerships.

As HOPE Qatar Centre celebrates this achievement, it remains focused on building on this strong foundation and reaching greater heights of excellence. Guided by its commitment, passion, teamwork, and shared purpose, HOPE Qatar Centre continues its journey towards truly becoming the First Choice of Parents and contributing to a more inclusive society in Qatar.



QIB, Injaz Qatar partner to equip students with life, financial skills

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has continued its collaboration with Injaz Qatar, marking the third year of the ‘Life Skills Programme’ for preparatory school students in Qatar.

The programme will continue to support Grade 7 and Grade 9 students, while also introducing Grade 8 students to practical financial concepts and digital banking through QIB Junior.

The initiative builds on the successful implementation of the programme during the 2025/26 academic year. QIB and INJAZ Qatar reached 25,084 Grade 7 and Grade 9 students across 77 preparatory

schools, including 72 public schools and five private schools following the Ministry of Education and Higher Education curriculum. A total of 190 teachers delivered the programmes during the year.

During the previous academic year, an estimated 12,570 Grade 8 students participated in an interactive fintech activity developed with QIB’s support using a demonstration of QIB Junior.

As part of the continued collaboration, Grade 7 students will participate in ‘It’s My Business’, a programme designed to develop entrepreneurial thinking by helping students understand key en-

trepreneurial characteristics and apply them to developing their own business ideas. Grade 9 students will continue to participate in ‘It’s My Future’, which equips them with practical knowledge to prepare for the world of work, including career planning, personal branding, and the development of soft and technical skills.

Mashaal Abdulaziz al-Derham, assistant general manager, head of Corporate Communications & Quality Assurance at QIB, said: “We are pleased to continue our collaboration with Injaz Qatar and build on the positive impact achieved over the past two years.

“By supporting Grade 7-9 students and extending their learning experience, we equip the younger generation with practical life, entrepreneurial and financial skills that will help them make informed decisions and confidently prepare for their future. This initiative reflects QIB’s commitment to youth development and to supporting the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.”

Emad al-Khaja, CEO of Injaz Qatar, said: “We are delighted to continue our successful collaboration with QIB and build on the positive results achieved during the previous two years. QIB’s continued support enables us to



The ‘Life Skills Programme’ will continue to support Grade 7 and Grade 9 students, while also introducing Grade 8 students to practical financial concepts and digital banking through QIB Junior.

provide students with engaging learning experiences that connect education with entrepreneurship, career readiness and financial awareness. Together, we remain committed to equipping young people in Qatar with the skills and knowledge they need to confidently navigate their future.”

The collaboration forms part

of the three-year programme launched by QIB and Injaz Qatar under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Since its launch, the initiative has focused on bridging classroom education with practical skills that prepare students for their academic, professional and financial futures.

Vodafone Qatar, Huawei host ‘Education Summit 2026’

Vodafone Qatar and Huawei recently hosted the ‘Education Summit 2026’ under the theme ‘Advancing Intelligent Education: AI and Education’.

During the event, education leaders, technology experts, government stakeholders and industry partners explored how artificial intelligence (AI) can support the transformation of Qatar’s education.

The event focused on the opportunities created by AI across teaching, learning, research, campus management, and education networks, highlighting the importance of building intelligent, connected, and future-ready education ecosystems.

Vodafone Qatar showcased how its connectivity and digital solutions can support educational institutions, including advanced fixed and mobile connectivity, managed campus networks, cloud and security solutions. The presentation also explored how these capabilities can enable more connected, secure and intelligent campuses, supporting institutions as they move towards AI-enabled learning environments.

Huawei introduced its practices on AIEC for Basic Education, AIPL for Higher Education, AI for Research, and AI Campus, highlighting their role in accelerating the transformation towards intelligent, personalised and future-ready education. Huawei



The ‘Education Summit 2026’ hosted by Vodafone Qatar and Huawei allowed education leaders, technology experts, government stakeholders and industry partners to explore how artificial intelligence can support the transformation of Qatar’s education.

also emphasised the role of AI in the classroom, exploring how AI-enabled technologies can create more interactive and personalised learning experiences. The session highlighted how intelligent classroom solutions can support teachers, engage students and enable data-driven approaches to education.

Vodafone Qatar also showcased Physical AI solutions during the summit, in collaboration with its partner, AGBOT, demonstrating applications across Qatar’s learning ecosystem, with robotics education solutions spanning K-12, vocational education and university-level research. The solutions include robotics interest classes and introductory AI courses, robot assembly, calibration and testing, secondary application development and advanced research.

Beyond the classroom, discussions also explored the digital in-

frastructure required to support AI-powered education. The AI-Driven Education Network session highlighted how next-generation connectivity and intelligent network infrastructure can provide this foundation, with high-performance, reliable, secure and intelligent networks supporting cloud services, AI applications, digital classrooms, research platforms and smart campus environments.

Baran Yurdagul, COO at Vodafone Qatar, said: “Connectivity is becoming a fundamental enabler of intelligent education. By combining advanced networks with cloud, AI and digital platforms, we are helping educational institutions create more connected, accessible and engaging learning environments. Our collaboration with Huawei reflects our commitment to supporting Qatar’s digital transformation and contributing to the continued development of the country’s education sector.”

The event concluded with a panel discussion featuring education and technology leaders, who discussed the opportunities and challenges associated with adopting AI in the education sector. Discussions covered topics including AI readiness, digital infrastructure, teacher enablement, personalised learning, research, data security, and the development of future-ready skills.

The summit reinforced the importance of collaboration between educational institutions, government and the technology sector in supporting the continued development of Qatar’s education sector. Vodafone Qatar remains committed to working closely with its partners and educational institutions to advance digital transformation through connectivity, digital infrastructure and innovative technology solutions.

To find out more about Vodafone Qatar, visit www.vodafone.qa/en

QF’s Pre-University Education Forum highlights Vision 2040

Coinciding with World Teachers’ Day, the forum sheds light on the sector’s key milestones and achievements

Qatar Foundation (QF) highlighted the key features of Pre-University Education Vision 2040, shedding light on the sector’s key milestones and achievements during its Pre-University Education Forum, which served as a platform for dialogue and shared reflection on the future of education and learning across QF schools.

Coinciding with World Teachers’ Day, the forum offers an opportunity to celebrate the vital role educators play in supporting and inspiring students, creating opportunities for learning and growth, and strengthening educational practices to respond to students’ needs and aspirations.

The forum brought together teachers, students, school leaders, and practitioners from across Pre-University Education schools and institutions through a series of sessions, workshops, and discussions focused on exchanging experiences and exploring innovative educational ideas and practices with a meaningful impact inside and beyond the classroom.

The forum also provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements over the past year and share experiences and ideas as part of Pre-University Education Vision 2040, which aims to strengthen educational quality and respond to the needs of a rapidly changing world, while keeping identity, culture, and values at the heart of the student learning experience.

Speaking at the forum, QF’s PUE President, Abeer al-Khalifa, affirmed that the future of education is charted not only by the knowledge provided to students, but also by the human values instilled in them that contribute to preparing them to become the changemakers of tomorrow.

She added that QF aspires to graduate students with a strong understanding of their identity and roots, equipped with critical-thinking skills and the ability to make responsible decisions, enabling them to contrib-

ute effectively to the progress of their communities and adapt to change while remaining grounded in their heritage and proud of their identity.

Al-Khalifa noted that Vision 2040 represents a shared commitment to all students and a responsibility shared across the education community, emphasising that exchanging the vision widely contributes to aligning collective efforts and strengthening awareness of the role each individual plays in shaping the future of education.

Al Khalifa further emphasised the central role teachers play in turning the vision into reality by designing meaningful learning experiences that contribute to building students’ character, nurturing their curiosity and confidence, and empowering them to discover their strengths and reach their full potential.

The forum also announced the winners of the Pre-University Education Awards 2026, which recognise outstanding individuals and teams whose contributions have strengthened educational quality and enriched the experiences of students and teachers.

Mahmoud Mohammed Aladdasi of Qatar Leadership Academy received the Outstanding Teacher Award, while Lina Othman of Qatar Academy Msheireb received the Outstanding Practitioner Award. The Outstanding Student Award was presented to Jassim Mohammed al-Mossalam of Qatar Academy Msheireb.

The Ejjadah Team from PUE Central Departments also received the Outstanding Team Award, while the Islamic Civilization Curriculum Team received the Curriculum Excellence Award.

The ceremony also recognised recipients of the Thana’a Professional Excellence accolade in recognition of their outstanding performance, dedication, and teamwork, which contributed to supporting the advancement of Pre-University Education at Qatar Foundation. **(QNA)**

CCQ launches 2nd cohort of Business Administration programme

Community College of Qatar (CCQ) has launched the second cohort of its Associate of Business Administration programme for students at the Ministry of Interior (MoI)’s penal and correctional institutions. Twenty new students begin their studies in Spring 2025–2026. The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs supports the programme, which CCQ runs in collaboration with the Penal and Correctional Institutions Department at MoI.

The institutional partnership aims to give inmates access to university education and academic qualifications and to support their educational and career paths.

The second cohort follows the success of the programme’s first run, which began in Fall 2023. Six students graduated in Spring 2026 after completing the requirements for the Associate of Business Administration. They were the first students from penal and correctional institutions to graduate from the programme.

The programme’s continuation also reflects the support CCQ receives from its partners. The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs sponsors the programme, and the Penal and Correctional Institutions Department at MoI provides the right environment for teaching to continue. Together, these partners have helped build a learning experience that allows students inside penal and correctional institutions to continue their university studies and earn an academic qualification, through a model designed around the nature of the correctional environment.

“The launch of the second cohort is an important step in the continuity of this academic programme, which combines education with rehabilitation and gives students in penal and correctional institutions the chance to continue their university education and earn an academic qualification,” said Dr Menahi al-Qahtani, head of the Management Department at CCQ, who oversees the programme. “The first cohort



Dr Menahi al-Qahtani

showed that the right educational pathway can deliver real results in supporting their future professional and personal growth.”

He added: “CCQ continues to work with the Penal and Correctional Institutions Department at the Ministry of Interior to offer a learning experience that meets CCQ’s academic standards while taking into account the environment in which the program is

delivered. We rely on a blended learning model that combines in-person teaching with interactive online learning. We also see the programme’s continuation as an extension of the partnership between both sides and an opportunity to widen access to education and academic qualifications.”

The programme grew out of a series of meetings and discussions between CCQ and the Penal and Correctional Institutions Department. The two sides explored how to make university education available to inmates in a way that suits the nature of penal and correctional institutions.

Under the current model, faculty members travel to the institution to teach part of the course in person, while the remaining classes take place through live, interactive online learning.

The initiative reflects CCQ’s role in providing educational and qualification opportunities and building institutional partnerships that serve the community.

Lusail University, QC launch master’s in arbitration, alternative dispute resolution

Lusail University yesterday launched its master’s programme in arbitration law and alternative dispute resolution in collaboration with Qatar Chamber (QC).

The move aims to equip specialised professionals with the legal knowledge and professional skills required to address national and international commercial and economic disputes, while keeping abreast of rapid developments in arbitration, mediation, negotiation, and other alternative dispute resolution processes.

Launched yesterday at a press conference, the programme directly responds to the rapid evolution the State of Qatar is witnessing across the economic, investment, and commercial sectors, accompanied by an increasing need for professionals capable of handling formidable disputes efficiently and delivering flexible, swift, and effective legal solutions, thereby strengthening a legal environment that supports investment and business.

Overall, the programme aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to build a diversified and sustainable knowledge-based economy, develop human capital, and strengthen national and professional skills to meet labour market needs.

This also contributes to an environment that attracts domestic and foreign investment by preparing professionals specialised in resolving commercial and investment disputes in conformity with established practices and standards at both the domestic and international levels.

Addressing the press conference, the Member of the Board of the Qatar International Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration (QICCA) at the Qatar Cham-



ber Sheikh Dr Thani bin Ali al-Thani underscored the importance of the aforementioned programme as the culmination of work that lasted more than two years, emphasising that it is among the first similar programmes in the region.

Sheikh Dr Thani highlighted QICCA’s role in the programme, stating that it serves in an advisory capacity by providing recommendations and proposing materials. He added that QICCA will continue to support Lusail University and its College of Law in this regard, while providing all services to the programme’s graduates until they are accredited as arbitrators at the centre.

QICCA operates in the areas of conciliation and arbitration, with rules introduced this year addressing all of these areas, Sheikh Dr Thani pointed out, noting that this gives graduates a thorough understanding of and familiarity with the provisions of Qatar’s arbitration and mediation laws.

Sheikh Dr Thani further emphasised that Qatar is a nation that has supported all forms of mediation, including commercial mediation, and was among the first countries to join the Singapore Convention on Mediation and the enforcement of mediated settlement agreements. He emphasised that the programme’s graduates will play a significant role in these fields. **(QNA)**



الاولية
AL-AWALIA

Invitation to Tender

Tender / Auction Number	Subject	Tender / Auction Document Fees (Non-refundable)	Tender / Auction Bond	Tender/Auction Offer	Closing Date
AL-AWALIA/TD/2026/33	Call-Off Agreement for the Supply of Gabbro Aggregate from Oman (CIF, Sahr Port) OR UAE (CIF, Fujairah Port or CIF, RAK-Say Port) for Qatar Primary Materials Company ("Supplies")	3,000 QAR	1,800,000 QAR	Two Bids (Technical & Commercial)	28 October 2026 02:00 PM

In accordance with the following conditions:

- Tender Documents can be collected online by sending email to tender.docs@qpmc.qa along with requested documents in point No.2.
- Tender Documents will be shared only after delivery of Deposit Slip Stamped by Commercial Bank along with Authorization Letter to the delegated person signed by authorized person as per Computer ID, Copy of commercial Registration (CR) (printed within the last 30 days), Business License and Computer ID.
- Bids are to be submitted in two sealed (in red wax) envelopes (Technical & Commercial) and addressed to Tenders and Auction Committee. Tender reference number and subject are to be clearly written on the envelopes, provided that the last date for submitting bids is one o'clock in the afternoon on the closing day. Any bids submitted after this date and time will not be accepted.
- Tenderers shall submit the proposals to our head office located at Lusail, Building No. 108, St. No. 303, Bay Marina Tower, 17th Floor before the closing date. (To get the map of the new building, please scan the QR code below).
- Tender Fees are nonrefundable and can be transferred online to Account of Qatar Primary Material Company-Bank A/C (4050465111-006) at Commercial Bank of Qatar. IBAN No. (QA 18 CBQA 0000 0000 4050 651111 006). Tender reference number and subject are to be written on the deposit slip.
- Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee/ Manager Cheque) must be valid for 120 days after closing date and must be submitted in separate & sealed envelope along with technical bid and a photocopy is to be attached with commercial bid. Bids without tender bond will be rejected.
- Bids must be valid for 90 days after the closing date.
- Any queries relating to the Tender Documents must only be raised in writing, preferably by email, to the address specified in the respective Tender Document. Any response issued by Qatar Primary Material Company will be in the form of a question and answer and will be distributed to all Tenderers without revealing the identity of the originator of the query(ies) in the Form of Tender Bulletins. Queries must be received at the address specified in the respective ITT Documentation at least five (5) calendar days prior to the Tender closing date. Any queries received after such a date will be ignored.
- The amount of the Performance Bond to be provided by the awarded bidder is (10% of the contract value) and its validity period must remain valid under the contract implementation period and the guarantee period according to the terms of the tender.
- The Technical Bids shall be opened within one week of the closing date.
- Qatar Primary Material Company has the right, during the contract period, to request an increase or decrease in the amounts of the items, works or services by a percentage not exceeding (20%) of the contract value with the same conditions and prices, provided that the increase is of the same type of contracted items, works or services.
- Qatar Primary Material Company's tendering terms and conditions apply.
- For any inquiries about the tender except collecting the documents, please contact tender@qpmc.qa
- Location of the new building



For further Inquiry, please send your queries at Fax Number: **44479559** or email to tender@qpmc.qa
or visit Qatar Primary Material Company website @ www.qpmc.qa

شركة قطر للمواد الأولية (ش.م.ق.) مقرها الرئيسي: المدينة، قطر، منطقة لوسيل، برج مارينا، رقم 108، الطابق 17، دoha-قطر، Lusail, Marina Tower No. 108 | CR No. 33204 | P.O Box 22095 | Tel. +974 4447 9411
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رأس المال المصرح به 200,000,000 QAR | رأس المال المدفوع 200,000,000 QAR | info@qpmc.qa www.qpmc.qa

Qatar govt school health services record 492,231 student visits in 2025

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Government school health services recorded 492,231 student visits in 2025, including 448,711 visits at schools, as the programme expands its focus on preventive care, early detection and digital health services.

Dr Leila Abdullah al-Dahneem, manager of School Health Services and Programme at the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) and senior consultant in community medicine, said the services are provided to students in government schools and kindergartens in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Public Health.

School clinics, staffed by licensed nurses linked to the PHCC health centres, provide primary healthcare, first aid and emergency care, as well as follow-up for students with chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy and severe allergies.

The programme also includes growth monitoring, vision screen-

ing, school vaccination campaigns and health education initiatives for students, parents and school staff.

A major recent development is the introduction of an electronic health declaration designed to give school nurses timely access to information about students' medical conditions, helping them prepare for emergencies and plan appropriate care.

The bilingual form, which replaces the previous paper-based process while retaining the paper option, can be completed by parents through an online link or QR code after identity verification. A pilot began in 10 schools on April 19, before the electronic declaration was rolled out across all government schools on September 6.

She noted that by September 28, the programme had received 15,727 electronic declarations out of approximately 140,000 targeted students, representing 11.2% of electronic submissions.

Officials stressed that the figure does not represent the overall completion rate because paper declarations continue to be accepted and are being consolidated

with electronic submissions.

Further, the digital system is intended to streamline data collection and allow schools to monitor submissions through a dedicated dashboard. Meanwhile, school nurses continue to record student visits, screening results and referrals in PHCC's Cerner electronic health record system, supporting continuity of care between school clinics and health centres.

Meanwhile, she said the school health programme currently has 346 active nurses covering 312 clinics in government schools, according to the latest daily coverage report for the 2026-27 academic year. Emergency cases are handled under approved clinical protocols. Students requiring immediate hospital care are transported by ambulance through 999 to Hamad Medical Corporation's emergency departments, while urgent cases are referred to health centres for same-day assessment.

Conditions potentially requiring emergency transport include severe injuries, acute asthma attacks, dangerously high or low blood sugar, severe

allergic reactions and seizures.

However, she stressed that early detection remains a key component of the programme. During the 2025-26 academic year, 54,804 students underwent vision screening out of 57,113 targeted, achieving 96% coverage. Of those screened, 4,469 required further assessment, with 2,311 referred to optometry clinics and 2,158 to ophthalmology clinics. Growth measurements were recorded for 141,337 students, representing 100% coverage, with students requiring further assessment referred to family physicians.

The programme has also expanded family-based behavioural treatment for overweight and obesity from two schools to nine primary schools across Qatar's three regions. In addition, school staff at 34 schools received training on responding to epilepsy seizures, while awareness activities for students and parents were conducted at 28 schools. The programme has also updated its asthma management plan under its asthma-friendly schools initiative.



Participants take part in 'Summer of Sports for All' race series

The Qatar Sports for All Federation concluded its "Summer of Sports for All 2026" race series, held at the Aspire Indoor Track, with 1,362 male and female participants of various ages and nationalities.

The races drew strong participation, with 676 runners taking part in the open race, while 686 women, including 641 Qataris, competed in the third edition of the women's race. Following the competitions, winners in the various categories were honoured, while participants received commemorative medals and encouragement awards to motivate them to continue taking part in upcoming races and sporting events.

The race series featured timed challenges for different age groups. Participants over 17 competed in 15- and 30-minute challenges, while a 10-minute challenge was held for those aged 7 to 17. Children aged 3 to 6 took part in a five-minute challenge.

Executive Director of the Qatar Sports for All Federation,

Abdullah al-Dosari, said the strong turnout across the series reflected growing interest in running and the eagerness of various segments of society to participate in open sporting activities.

He said family participation was one of the most prominent features of the races, given its role in encouraging children and young people to engage in physical activity and establishing sports as a way of life.

He called on people from all segments of society to continue participating in the federation's upcoming events and programmes, stressing the federation's commitment to providing diverse, open sporting activities suitable for different age groups and contributing to a culture of sports participation and community engagement.

The federation's events are scheduled to continue with the fourth and final round of the "Summer of Sports for All" women's race series on Friday, ahead of the launch of the "Autumn of Sports for All" race series later this month. **(QNA)**

Students triumph in WCM-Q 'Healing Hands' essay contest

Four Qatari high school students won week-long research laboratory experiences at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) when they triumphed in the college's annual "Healing Hands" essay competition.

The winning students were Abrar al-Khulaifi and Manayer Abdulaziz al-Ansari of Vision International School, Hassan Nasser al-Ansari of Qatar Academy Doha, and Sara Ali Ali of Qatar Academy Al Wakra. A further 13 high school students received honourable mention certificates.

The contest, run by the Office of Student Outreach and Educational Development at WCM-Q, is open to Qatari students in grades 9, 10 and 11. The programme is designed to inspire young nationals to pursue careers in medicine and biomedical science; many previous winners and participants of the Healing Hands contest have gone on to join WCM-Q as students.

This year's contest asked students to write an 800-word essay on the topic, "The Humanities and



High school students who took part in the WCM-Q Healing Hands essay contest, alongside their parents and WCM-Q faculty and staff.

the Future of Medicine in an Age of AI."

The essays of the four winners and those who received honourable mentions were noted for the originality of their ideas, their command of English, the soundness of their supporting arguments, and the coherent structure of their essays. The judges also acknowledged the generally high standard of this year's entries.

Each of the four winners received the WCM-Q Doctors of the Future Scholarship, which allowed them to spend a week gaining hands-on research experience in

one of the college's state-of-the-art core laboratories.

Manayer, one of the winning students, said: "The Doctors of the Future scholarship was a valuable and unforgettable experience. It was exciting to see how an advanced research laboratory operates and to learn about how scientific research contributes to medical discoveries, new treatments and improved patient care. It strengthened my understanding of the connection between research and medicine and reinforced my passion for becoming a doctor."

Noha Saleh, director of pre-medical administration, student outreach and educational development, said: "The high school students who participated greatly impressed us this year with the scope and ambition of their essays, their sophisticated use of English, and the thoroughness with which they analysed their own ideas. I have no doubt that all who participated will make very strong candidates if they decide to apply to study medicine at WCM-Q in the near future."

Dr Rachid Bendriss, professor of English as a second language, assistant professor of education in medicine, and associate dean for foundation, student outreach and educational development programmes, said: "The Healing Hands competition is an excellent way to encourage high school students to think deeply about the practice of medicine and, by extension, pursuing a rewarding career in the field. The quality of the essays demonstrated great potential among the participants."

Ministry of Culture to host musical performance on Saturday

The Music Affairs Centre under the Ministry of Culture will host the inaugural performance of the "Maqam" Choir on Saturday at ministry's Dukhan Theatre, featuring an a cappella vocal showcase.

The choir will perform a selection of classic Arab musical heritage using four-part vocal harmonies. Conductor Sireen Abdullah noted that the "Maqam" choir relies on the human voice as the core element of its musical composition,

distributing voices across four harmonic lines to highlight the richness of Arabic melody while preserving its original identity. She said that the singers were trained to harmonise into a single musical texture while keeping

each vocal line distinct. By emphasising collective listening and vocal capabilities, the choir offers a renewed perspective on classic Arab musical heritage through four-part a cappella harmony. **(QNA)**

Qatar Photography Center highlights Alaska's wildlife

The Qatar Photography Center under the Ministry of Culture is hosting a solo exhibition featuring 43 photographs taken at Katara's Katmai National Park in Alaska by Qatari photographer Khalifa al-Mansouri at Katara's Building 18, running through November 4.

The exhibition documents the brown bear's life, hunting habits, and environmental interaction.

Al-Mansouri highlighted that overcoming Alaska's challenging terrain for his debut solo show aims to connect audiences with this wild predator, supporting the centre's mission to showcase local talent. **(QNA)**





الهلال الأحمر القطري
Qatar Red Crescent

Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/EMS/09-2026	Renovation of First Aid clinic at Villaggio Mall	7000 Q.R	500 Q.R	28-10-2026

The documents can be collected from Medical Affairs Division, Ain Khalid Area, Sunday to Thursday from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm till the closing date or by sending email along with the requested documents below.

Required Documents:

- 1.Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.
2. Company's Commercial registration copy with the business activity clearly specified therein.
3. Bank deposit voucher with the value of documents not refunded & account details:
 - Account Name: Qatar Red Crescent.
 - Bank: Al Rayan.
 - Account Number: 0003-100689-200
 - IBAN Number: QA09MAFR000000000003100689200

**For more information: please call: (50044554), or
Email whc.tenders@qrccs.org.qa**

QDF wins 'Airport Retailer of the Year' award

Qatar Duty Free (QDF) won the "Airport Retailer of the Year" award for the fourth consecutive year at the 2026 Frontier Awards ceremony in Cannes, France. QDF also received the award for "Best Speciality Concept – Hybrid & F&B" for the recent opening of Lancôme Café de la Rose. During the ceremony, QDF was praised for its continued investment in its retail and hospitality offering, alongside its acclaimed "experientricity" concept which places the traveller experience at the centre of every decision and interaction.

During the past 12 months, QDF has introduced 15 new retail concepts at Doha's Hamad International Airport, from the opening of the first POP MART in the Middle East to an expansive holiday activation with Charlotte Tilbury.

Winning the Best Speciality Concept – Hybrid & F&B category, Lancôme Café de la Rose was recognised for its exceptional offer and design, as well as being the first airport beauty café. Blending the Lancôme beauty experience with a dedicated café space, it gives passengers a distinctive new way to discover the brand and its Absoluée Collection.

Thabet Musleh, Qatar Airways Group Chief Retail & Hospitality Officer, said, "We are honoured and touched to once again receive the highest recognition for QDF at the Frontier Awards. To be presented with the 'Airport Retailer of the Year' award, for a fourth year in a row, is a fantastic achievement for our team and partners." **(QNA)**



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy
LNG

**QatarEnergy LNG
Tender Invitation**

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	SUP/C/AKC/7704/26 FOR SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF A FIRE PUMP ROOM AND FIRE WATER TANK - QCD APPROVED	07/10/2026 to 15/10/2026	0	0	09/11/2026

Scope of Work:

To design, supply, install, and commission a firefighting system, including the construction of a fire pump room and fire water tank at Al Waha Club - Al Khor Community, in accordance with QCS 2014, Qatar Civil Defence regulations (MOI Approved) and NFPA standards. The details of the requirement are defined in the SCOPE OF WORK / SERVICES.

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

F&B sector tops 6,000 outlets in Qatar, says tourism exec

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

The food and beverage landscape (F&B) in Qatar has expanded to more than 6,000 restaurants, alongside ongoing efforts to benchmark high service standards across the country.

The milestone underscores the sector's growth following Qatar Tourism's launch of the 'Taste of Qatar' initiative in 2025, which classifies local dining venues using a three-star rating system to enhance hospitality competitiveness.

Speaking at the 'Taste of Qatar Series II – Spotlight on Qatari Entrepreneurship' event organised by Qatar Tourism, Jassim al-Mahmoud, director of Public Relations and Communications at Visit Qatar, highlighted the scale and quality of the national culinary market.

Held in the presence of HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, chairman of Qatar Tourism, the event, gathered a selection of local entrepreneurs

and creative culinary talents who are contributing to the growth and evolution of Qatar's hospitality sector.

It was also highlighted by a fire-side chat with Omar Abdulrahman al-Jaber, chief of Operations Affairs at Qatar Tourism, and panel discussions that focused key topics and challenges in entrepreneurship and the F&B sector.

"We now have more than 6,000 restaurants offering cuisines from around the world," al-Mahmoud said in his opening speech. He explained that international recognition has accompanied the quantitative expansion of the sector, pointing to global accolades earned by local establishments.

Al-Mahmoud noted that 30 Qatari restaurants have been recommended by the Michelin Guide, while eight additional venues received government recommendations. He emphasised that local entrepreneurs have played an essential role in driving the sector's quality improvements and



Jassim al-Mahmoud, director of Public Relations and Communications at Visit Qatar. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen.

international standing.

"These achievements would not have been possible without the contributions of entrepreneurs across the hospitality and catering sectors," he emphasised.

Under the 'Taste of Qatar' framework launched by Qatar

Tourism to classify cafes and dining spots, top-performing venues receive three stars for meeting peak industry criteria.

"In this context, to foster and support creativity, we launched Taste of Qatar to classify Qatari restaurants and cafes and promote

Qatar as a global hospitality destination," he emphasised, adding that the effort aligns with national growth goals to ensure standard service quality across all resident demographics.

He said, "We aim to promote the hospitality sector, establish high standards of service and support sustainable development in line with Qatar's vision of providing exceptional experiences for both citizens and expatriates."

Al-Mahmoud pointed out that 'Taste of Qatar' will function as an ongoing hub for industry leaders rather than a one-off gathering.

"Our ambitions for the Taste of Qatar programme extend beyond organising panel discussions; we aim to create a sustainable platform that facilitates the exchange of creativity and expertise among entrepreneurs," he explained.

He added that the initiative seeks to strengthen long-term commercial competitiveness while building a cohesive service environment.

Israeli settlers attack AFP photographer in West Bank

Israeli settlers yesterday beat an AFP photographer and fired guns in the direction of him and a colleague as they covered ongoing violence by settlers against West Bank olive farmers.

Jaafar Ashtiyeh, 58, a veteran photographer for AFP in the Palestinian territory, suffered bruises to his head and torso and was taken by ambulance to a hospital.

Ashtiyeh and another AFP photographer, John Wessels, were near the northern village of Aqraba where they noticed an Israeli soldier detaining a man as local Palestinians picked olives. A quad bike suddenly raced towards the AFP journalists on top of the hill and a man from it opened live fire, with one Palestinian dropping to the ground. **(AFP)**

Israeli strikes kill two people in Gaza

Reuters
Cairo

Israeli strikes killed at least two Palestinians in the Gaza Strip yesterday, health officials said, with one killed near Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City and the other in a separate strike nearby.

The Israeli military told Reuters the two strikes targeted fighters.

The strikes in Gaza have persisted despite growing political pressure on Israel, which seems determined to turn the entire strip into a sea of rubble with its objective of subjugating Hamas.

The Hamas' storming of Gaza started the war, which according to the Palestinian authorities, has resulted killing more than 74,000 people by Israel.

Israel, which accuses Hamas of rearming and launching attacks in violation of a ceasefire, has stepped up strikes on the group in recent weeks.

Hamas has denied trying to



Palestinians walk along a street lined with destroyed buildings at the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. **(AFP)**

carry out attacks or rebuild its arsenal and accuses Israel of undermining the Gaza peace deal.

Last year's US-brokered Gaza ceasefire calls for eventual reconstruction of the territory.

But little progress has been made towards implementing a deal to end the conflict that in-

cludes terms for Hamas to disarm and Israel to withdraw its troops.

Gaza health officials have said at least 1,400 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since last October's ceasefire.

Israel says four of its soldiers have been killed by fighters in Gaza during the same period.

Daman hosts ISSA-organised technical seminar on innovations in social security

QNA
Doha

The technical seminar on "Digital and Management Innovations in Social Security Institutions" opened in Doha yesterday.

Organised by the International Social Security Association (ISSA) in co-operation with the ISSA Liaison Office for Arab Countries, with the support of the ISSA Liaison Office for North Africa, the two-day seminar is being hosted by the General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (Daman).

The seminar opened with remarks by Daman, delivered by Jaber Abdullah al-Ansari, head of retirement affairs, on behalf of Ahmed bin Ali al-Hammadi, Daman Director-General.

The opening also included remarks by Marcelo Abi-Ramia Casetano, ISSA Secretary-General.

Al-Ansari said demographic changes, changing patterns of work and the need to expand coverage pose shared challenges for social security institutions, requiring an exchange of expertise and co-ordinated efforts. He noted



that beneficiaries assess an institution by the ease of access to its services and their deliverance, how clear its procedures are and how much they trust the institution.

He said true innovation is not merely digitising procedures but redesigning them for the needs of beneficiaries. Al-Ansari stressed the importance of integrating digital and administrative dimensions in institutional operations.

He said Daman is implementing its strategy, based on the pillars of trust, transparency, care and sustainability, and highlighted its digital initiatives, including the virtual assistant Sarah, the video call centre and its application.

He stressed that the success of digital transformation depends on developing the workplace and its culture, underscoring the imperativeness of engaging regional and international experiences and benefiting from leading practices through the ISSA network.

The seminar brings together regional and international experts to discuss the transformations at social security institutions. It examines ways to use digital and administrative innovation for improvements on different fronts.

The efforts are aligned with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 to support human and social development and improve services.

QU's College of Nursing celebrates White Coat Ceremony for Class of 2029

Qatar University's (QU) College of Nursing held its White Coat Ceremony for 54 nursing students from the Class of 2029, marking an important milestone in their academic and professional journey as they prepare to begin clinical training.

The ceremony was attended by college leadership, faculty and staff, students and their families, and guests from Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) and Aspetar.

The annual White Coat Ceremony reflects the College of Nursing's commitment to strengthening students' professional identity, instilling the values of responsibility, compassion, teamwork, and patient safety, and preparing qualified nursing professionals to contribute to the future of healthcare and serve the community in Qatar.

Dr Majeda El-Banna, dean of the College of Nursing, highlighted the significance of the occasion, saying: "The White Coat Ceremony marks an important milestone in our students' academic and professional journey, representing their transition into the clinical practice of nursing and their com-



Dr Ghada al-Kuwari



Students of class of 2029 at White Coat Ceremony.



Dr Majeda El-Banna



Professor Hanadi al-Hamad

mitment to becoming compassionate, competent, and responsible healthcare professionals.

The white coat also reminds them that nursing goes beyond knowledge and clinical skills to encompass respect, communication, and advocacy for those in need of care and support."

Dr Waqas Sami, associate dean for Academic Affairs at the College of Nursing, said: "Receiving the white coat marks an important stage in nursing students' academ-

ic journey as they begin to connect the knowledge and skills gained through their studies with clinical training and professional practice. At the College of Nursing, we are committed to providing students with strong academic and professional foundations and encouraging continuous learning and development, enabling them to deliver safe, high-quality nursing care."

Dr Ghada al-Kuwari, assistant dean for Student Affairs at the College of Nursing, said: "The

ceremony holds special meaning for our students. It is an opportunity to celebrate what they have achieved so far while reminding them of the responsibility that comes with choosing nursing as a profession. Through our continued guidance, we aim to build students' confidence and sense of belonging to the profession while reinforcing the values of responsibility, respect, compassion, and teamwork throughout their academic and professional journey."

The ceremony featured Professor Hanadi al-Hamad, Medical Director of Rumailah Hospital and the Qatar Rehabilitation Institute, as guest of honour and keynote speaker.

In her remarks, she highlighted the vital role of nurses within the healthcare system. She emphasised the importance of collaboration, teamwork, mutual trust, and effective communication across healthcare disciplines to deliver safe, high-quality patient care.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MUHAMMAD ARSHED ALI

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. EJ0071662
QID No. 28005008450

hereby change my name

from

MUHAMMAD ARSHED ALI

to

MD ARSHED ALI

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, SHARELYN WEN LI CHENG SHENG

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NETHERLAND Passport No. NR4P2B7J4
QID No. 28852800109

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CHENG CHANG SHENG SHARELYN LI

Any objection, please contact
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Netanyahu's election narrative



An election billboard of Israel's Likud party bearing portraits of (L-R) Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem with a message in Hebrew reading 'They want Netanyahu to lose, Don't let them win', ahead of country's legislative elections, in Netanyahu. Israel heads to the polls on October 27 in its first election since the Gaza war began, in what is seen as a referendum on Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu. **(AFP)**

Iran drone plot fears led US to remove UK bombers

Reuters
Washington

A suspected plot involving Iran to launch a complex drone attack on a key British airbase led the US to remove its B-1 bomber aircraft from the base, two US officials told Reuters yesterday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Iran has denied any involvement in any alleged plot at RAF Fairford, the preferred European base for US bombers. British police said yesterday they had arrested a 22-year-old British man in London on suspicion of preparation of terrorist acts as part of their investigation into the suspected plot.

A spokesperson for the US military's European Command declined to comment, saying: "It is inappropriate to discuss matters of intelligence, and we will not discuss specific force protection measures."

"As demonstrated across multiple operations, America's bombers, including B-1s, B-2s, and B-52s — can deliver precision global strike capabilities — including through operations that launch and recover from the continental US — anywhere, anytime," the spokesperson said.

Alien 'phoenix planet' was born from the ashes of a dying star

Reuters
Washington

In ancient mythology, the phoenix was a miraculous bird with a cyclical pattern of life and death, perishing in flames only to rise again from the ashes. Astronomers have now found a world that rightly can be called a phoenix planet.

Researchers said this exoplanet, as planets beyond our solar system are called, appears to have been born from material expelled into space during the death throes of a star a bit bigger than the sun, and now orbits the highly compact stellar remnant that was left behind, called a white dwarf.

It is classified as a second-generation planet, meaning it did not form from the swirling disk of material surrounding a newborn star, as Earth and other first-generation planets did, but rather from the leftovers of a doomed star.

"This is the first example of a planet forming around a white dwarf," said Jamie Williams, a doctoral student in astrophysics at the University of Warwick in England and lead author of the study published this week in the journal Nature Astronomy.

The white dwarf is located about 250 light-years from Earth, near the constellation Cetus. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9tn miles.

The planet is a gas giant perhaps slightly more massive than Jupiter, our solar system's largest planet. It orbits the white dwarf every 4.4 days at only 4% the distance between Earth and the sun. It is so close that the blazingly hot white dwarf's extreme ultraviolet radiation is causing the planet's outer atmosphere to evaporate, with a portion then falling into the white dwarf.

The planet's chemical pattern points to its second-generation origin. It is rich in niobium, copper and zinc, the type of elements that certain dying stars cast off when they expand in their death throes, indicating the planet formed from a disk of this expelled material that surrounded the stellar corpse.

"In myths, a phoenix is born again from its own ashes. In the case of this planet, it is born again from the ashes of its dying host star, and therefore the planetary system is reborn. A second-generation planet is defined as one born after its host star dies — in this case after it has become a white dwarf," Williams said.

The researchers used data from the orbiting Hubble, TESS and FUSE telescopes, and hope to use the James Webb Space Telescope to confirm their conclusions.

A small number of potential second-generation planets previously have been identified orbiting pulsars, a rare type of neutron star, another type of stellar remnant.

"White dwarfs are much more common than pulsars, and over 95% of stars in the Milky Way will evolve to become a white dwarf. Therefore, there would be many more second-generation planets around white dwarfs than around pulsars," Williams said.

While the newly discovered planet would be inhospitable for life, another second-generation planet potentially could be habitable.

"If a gas giant formed around a white dwarf, then a rocky planet could form, too. White dwarfs cool predictably over time and as they get cooler, their cooling slows. So if a second-generation rocky planet formed close enough to the white dwarf then it could remain in the habitable zone for billions of years," Williams said.

A second study published in the same journal describes another exotic celestial phenomenon roughly 300 to 500 light-years from Earth in the constellation Taurus.

Trump holds Nebraska rally in bid to keep state in Republican column

Reuters

Grand Island, Nebraska

US President Donald Trump pledged to expand access to tax-exempt diesel fuel while warning of a dark future if Democrats win the midterms during a rally on Monday night in Nebraska, a state where farmers and truckers face sharply higher fuel prices and inflation has weighed heavily on the rural economy.

His stop in the city of Grand Island was part of Trump's 32-day sprint to the November 3 midterm elections, a campaign in which he is spending considerable time in conservative strongholds, helping defend Senate and House seats that until several months ago were considered safe for Republicans. Trump, as he has done in previous rallies, urged Republicans to "pretend" he is on the ballot, arguing that voters should view the midterms as a referendum on his administration and economic record.

"With your support, just 29 days from now, Nebraska is going to defeat the radical-left Dumb-o-crats once again," Trump said in the opening moments of his remarks.

His party is trying to persuade voters that investment, manufacturing and economic growth under Trump outweigh the pain of higher prices stemming from the unpopular US-Israeli war on Iran.

But Republicans enter the final weeks of the campaign facing a difficult national political environment. A Reuters/Ipsos poll completed on Monday found Trump's approval rating at 32%, matching the lowest reading of his political career, while registered voters preferred Democrats over Republicans 44% to 37% when asked which party they would support in the midterms. Among independents, Democrats led 37% to 21%, with 28% undecided.

Reuters polling and analysis have also found Republicans' opponents competitive in a number of states Trump won by double digits in 2024, including Nebraska. Trump carried Nebraska by more than 20 percentage points in 2024, but public polling consistently shows a competitive contest between Republican Senator Pete Ricketts and independent Dan Osborn.

During the rally, Trump flitted through various topics, from Iran to



President Donald Trump dances after speaking during a campaign rally at Pinnacle Bank Expo Centre in Grand Island, Nebraska. (AFP)

Venezuela to his legally and financially dubious pledge to give all adults \$5,000 if the Republicans win the midterms.

He also suggested that Iran could "take out" a major US city like Los Angeles or San Diego, prompting swift backlash from California leaders and even some fellow Republicans.

He again attacked the media on multiple occasions and criticised former President Joe Biden, who has proven an enduring Trump foil, even as he has been out of office for almost two years. Throughout the speech, he painted a dark picture of America should the Democrats take control of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"They want to burn it down," Trump said of the Democratic Party. "Their whole life is talking about radicalisation and stupidity."

The most significant policy news of the evening was the announcement of an executive order expanding access to red-dye diesel, which is exempt from some taxes but has generally been limited to off-road and agricultural uses.

Supporters were packed into the Heartland Events Center in Grand Island, many wearing Trump's signature red shirts and others sporting University of Nebraska attire in the same shade. Organisers brought out hundreds of additional chairs to accommodate sup-

porters in the rear of the arena, as the crowd filled available seating ahead of Trump's remarks.

Trump has grown agitated at recent reporting of empty chairs and early departures at his signature rallies.

For many, the draw was the unusual sight of Trump in the Republican-heavy state of Nebraska. He has only visited the state about six times since 2016 and not once since 2022, public records show.

"I am not sure I will ever see him in person again and didn't want to miss this. He doesn't come here often," said Nancy Rhodes, a 54-year-old stay-at-home mother who drove an hour to see the president.

Rhodes said Trump's decision to start a war with Iran has made things more expensive — and may hurt Trump's party's chances of retaining power — but said disarming Iran's nuclear program was worth the cost.

Trump started his campaign swing last week with stops in Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama and Ohio, reflecting his goal of energizing voters in Republican-friendly states while making himself the central messenger for a party facing concerns about his political standing.

He told reporters on Monday that he plans to travel nearly every day until the November 3 midterms, including stops in Iowa and Michigan.

Kenya reports first Ebola death

AFP

Nairobi

Kenya has reported its first-ever Ebola death, the health minister said yesterday, after a Kenyan man who had been living in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) died after returning to the country.

The DRC declared its 17th Ebola outbreak in May. The deadly disease has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years.

Kenya has never previously reported a case. Neighbouring Uganda recorded 20 — almost all people who had travelled from the DRC — and two deaths, before being declared Ebola-free in August.

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said a team was heading to Kenya to provide assistance, and its director general Jean Kaseya would also visit in the coming days.

The Kenyan citizen, who has not been named but was referred to as a 40-year-old businessman, fell ill around a month ago and had been treated in the DRC, Health Minister Aden Duale told reporters.

He travelled overland to the Ugandan capital, Kampala, and then flew to Nairobi on October 3.

Duale said the man was



People walk outside the hospital where the first Ebola patient had been admitted before he died. (Reuters)

suffering "fever, chills, intense fatigue, weakness, muscle pain, painful swallowing, sore throat and bleeding under the skin at the injection sites".

The man's relatives took him to a Nairobi hospital, where he was confirmed positive for the virus, before he "regrettably passed on last night at around 11:30" in the evening, Duale said.

Arrangements for a "safe and dignified burial" were planned for later yesterday, in line with public health standards.

Kenyan authorities have identified 28 contacts of the deceased, including family members and healthcare workers, but none have tested positive for Ebola so far.

Authorities are pursuing a further 23 passengers and four crew members who were on the same flight and that potential quarantine for those at risk had been

prepared. "I wish to assure the public not to panic, as all systems are in place to mitigate the spread of the disease," Duale said.

More care was needed at border entry points as "diseases know no boundaries", Patrick Amoth, director general at the health ministry, told reporters. "The failure is the system that did not work," he added to AFP, questioning how someone with such obvious symptoms was able to travel.

As of October 2, the World Health Organisation had recorded 4,082 deaths out of 8,463 cases since the emergence in the DRC of the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, for which there is still neither a vaccine nor a specific treatment.

After starting in the northeastern Ituri province, the current outbreak has spread to seven provinces in the north and east.

Children bear brunt of Ethiopia's Tigray clashes

AFP

Addis Ababa

Lying on a hospital bed, rolled-up blankets propping up the remains of her legs, 10-year-old double-amputee Iyerusalem is among scores of civilians wounded in northern Ethiopia after fighting erupted last month.

"I was in our compound with my older brother and our horse when we were hit. My brother and the horse died," she told AFP from Ayder Comprehensive Specialised Hospital in Mekelle, capital of the northern Tigray state.

Fighting broke out between the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and federal forces on September 23. The Ethiopian army pushed back the assault and seized Mekelle without a fight this weekend after TPLF leaders and troops abandoned the city.

Many of the wounded live in remote villages hours from the hospital along difficult roads where there has been fighting and shelling.

"Right now, my amputated legs hurt badly," said Iyerusalem, who comes from Qarsole village in Alamata district, south of Mekelle.

"If I get medical treatment and can walk again, I want to go back to school," she said, as her father Hiluf watched anxiously.

In the same hospital lies 12-year-old Hana, her face torn apart by a blast that broke her leg, and killed her mother and brother. "First I heard a loud explosion, and the whole house shook. I was scared and did not even know what had happened. I could not open my eyes or my mouth," she said.

"The sound of the explosion keeps coming back in my head."

In a nearby room were Betlehem, 10, who suffered a broken leg, and her sister Melet, 6, who was injured in the neck. Their pregnant mother was killed by heavy artillery.

"The bomb hit our house directly, all these people have died, but no one is being held responsible. There is no government," said Haftom, the father of the family, a



Members of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) patrol after Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) army retreated from Mekelle. (Reuters)

39-year-old shopkeeper.

The hospital's emergency coordinator Birhanu Hailemariam said many patients had come from southern Tigray.

In recent days 34 people had

been wounded by "heavy artillery, drones, gunfire and explosives have arrived at our hospital," he said, 23 of them children. One person had died.

Staff lacked basic equipment and medicine, including anaesthesia, he said, "but we are doing our best to treat everyone."

While he said the situation was not as bad as the 2020-22 Tigray war, which killed an estimated 600,000 according to the African Union, there was an atmosphere of fear permeating the hospital.

Whether it is the rebels or the government "both are hurting people," said another doctor, who asked for anonymity.

"We do not know who carried out the bombardment. It is war," said Iyerusalem's father, Hiluf, avoiding blaming either the TPLF or the federal forces out of fear of reprisals.

As his daughter stared impassively ahead, Hiluf pleaded for aid and assistance to help her recovery.

"I do not want to fight with anyone," he said. "Let there be peace for us."

Mali military says it has entered key city of Kidal

AFP

Bamako

The Malian army says it has entered the strategic northern city of Kidal, which was captured around five months ago by Tuareg separatists who announced their withdrawal earlier yesterday as the military advanced.

In late April, jihadists from Al-Qaeda-linked JNIM and its Tuareg separatist allies kicked off a series of attacks aimed at weakening Mali's junta rulers, including taking control of Kidal and killing the defence minister.

The Tuareg separatist Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) said in a statement earlier in the day it had "decided to carry out a strategic and controlled withdrawal of its forces from the city of Kidal".

The announcement came just as Mali's armed forces announced "large-scale air-ground opera-

tions" with its paramilitary allies from Russia's Africa Corps in the larger Kidal region.

By mid-afternoon, two Malian officers confirmed to AFP that the armed forces had arrived in the city.

A convoy left the town of Anefis yesterday morning and "entered Kidal shortly before 1:00pm. We encountered no resistance", one of the officers said.

The other reported that the armed forces had "arrived in Kidal ahead of schedule".

An officer in Gao who spoke on condition of anonymity additionally said that troops had been moving in the Kidal region over "the past few days" with an aim of securing "the Malian population and Kidal, and to fight against terrorism".

In its statement, the FLA said that it left Kidal "due to the disproportionate use of aerial assets by Russian mercenaries from Africa Corps and the terrorist forces of the Bamako military junta" in order to "preserve human lives".



Quebec election win for separatists could crimp Carney’s response to Trump

Reuters
Montreal, Quebec

A separatist party narrowly won Quebec’s election on Monday, a result that could make it tougher for Prime Minister Mark Carney to maintain national unity against US President Donald Trump.

Provisional results showed the predominantly French-speaking province of 9mn had opted for the Parti Quebecois of Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, who is promising to hold a referendum on breaking from Canada once Trump leaves office.

“A referendum is a chance to de-

cide things for ourselves... our national destiny will be achieved one day,” Plamondon, a 49-year-old former lawyer, told cheering supporters.

But he faces challenges, since the PQ only won 59 of the 127 seats in the Quebec national assembly, or five short of a majority. The legislature must approve a referendum vote.

Plamondon conceded he would need support from opposition parliamentarians to proceed.

The widely expected result reflected voter fatigue with the centre-right Coalition Avenir Quebec government, in office since 2018, analysts said. The CAQ lost all its 79 seats.



Parti Quebecois (PQ) leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon reacts to the results of the provincial elections, in Montreal, Quebec. (Reuters)

Carney, who has stressed the need for a united front to tackle Trump’s tariffs, must now work with a Quebec premier who is determined to break up Canada.

In addition, the energy-rich province of Alberta will hold a non-binding vote this month on whether its residents want independence.

Independence votes held by previous PQ governments in 1980 and 1995 failed, and polls indicate support for the idea of breaking with Canada is at 30%, near record lows. Plamondon, citing the political uncertainty and economic damage done by the tariffs, says he will not call another referendum until Trump is out of White House.

In remarks addressed to Carney, Plamondon said he would defend Quebec’s interests above all, but reiterated that he was happy to work with Ottawa whenever it suited Quebec.

Despite the unclear referendum prospects, some PQ policies look set to boost tension with Ottawa, however. The party plans to resist any federal bid to boost immigration, cut Quebec’s ties to the British monarchy and block a proposed high-profile high-speed rail link with Ontario.

Carney congratulated Plamondon on X, saying, “Building a stronger Quebec is core to our mission of building a stronger Canada.”

Ex-president Bolsonaro wins big without his name on ballot

Reuters
Brasilia

The biggest winner in Brazil’s blockbuster weekend election did not even appear on the ballot.

Banned from public office, former president Jair Bolsonaro is under house arrest, serving a 27-year sentence for a coup plot after his 2022 election loss. The 71-year-old watched from confinement on Sunday as his eldest son, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, scored an upset victory over leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the first round of the presidential election.

The result, which pundits linked to a right-wing wave sweeping the region and Lula’s own campaign missteps, made Flavio the favourite to win second-round voting on October 25. The shock victory represented a stunning reversal of his father’s fortunes as the rehabilitated Bolsonaro family and ideological movement emerged stronger than ever.

Candidates from Bolsonaro’s right-wing Liberal Party won up and down the ballot, demonstrating growing traction for the brand despite his legal woes, which the new right-wing Congress could resolve when it takes office in January.

Along with Flavio’s surprising success, four more members of



Presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro gestures as he votes during the general election, in Rio de Janeiro. (Reuters/File Photo)

the family won public office on Sunday including Senate seats for Michelle Bolsonaro, the ex-president’s wife, and second son Carlos while brother Renato and youngest son Jair Renan took seats in the lower house.

“In Brazilian political history, I do not remember any political clan that ever managed to elect so many members all at once,” said political analyst Antonio Flavio Testa, who served on the former president’s transition team in 2018.

When the imprisoned ex-president tapped his son to run for Brazil’s highest office in December, markets tumbled and centre-right allies turned up their noses. Flavio enlisted a little-known

lawmaker from his own party, Alfredo Gaspar, as running mate because no other major party would join the ticket.

Flavio’s most important ally could not appear in public even virtually to campaign for him but still loomed large over the race. An AI-generated avatar of the elder Bolsonaro gave a controversial endorsement of Flavio at his campaign launch.

The real Jair Bolsonaro has moved from serving his sentence in prison to house arrest since March due to ill health including complications from a 2018 stabbing. The Supreme Court prohibited visits from his eldest son for the past three months.

Their Liberal Party nearly doubled its bloc in the 81-seat Senate on Sunday to 28 seats, the strongest result for a party since Brazil’s constitution was enacted in the 1980s after the country’s return to democracy.

That will put amnesty for the elder Bolsonaro at the top of Congress’ agenda next year, according to a close aide of Flavio who requested anonymity to speak openly. A vote on the matter could come even sooner if Flavio wins and the current Congress decides to curry favor with the incoming government.

Flavio said in early September that he hoped he would be inaugurated with his father present. “I ask God for the opportunity to walk up the ramp of Planalto Palace next year alongside president Jair Messias Bolsonaro,” he said.

Bolsonaro and Lula, who got 47% and 45% of Sunday’s vote respectively, go head-to-head in a second-round vote that political consulting firm Think Policy said would be “very difficult, but not impossible” for Lula to win.

To do that, Lula needs to get 62% of voters who backed conservative candidates other than Flavio in the first round, Think Policy estimated.

With prospects for Flavio’s victory promising, Liberal Party president Valdemar da Costa Neto told Reuters that the elder Bolsonaro could once again play a role in government under his son.



Iceland’s Foreign Minister Thorgerour Katrin Gunnarsdottir welcomes US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at Keflavik Airport during his visit to Iceland. On the left is US ambassador to Iceland Billy Long. (AFP)

Iceland is ‘critical outpost’ for security, says Rubio

AFP
Reykjavik

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said yesterday that Iceland had long been a “critical outpost” for security during a visit to the island, as his country pushes for greater American influence in the Arctic region.

His trip came after US President Donald Trump has stirred up the power balance in the region by making threats to buy or annex Greenland.

The US signed a security pact with Denmark and Greenland in late September that will allow Washington to establish two new military bases there, drawing the autonomous Danish territory further into US orbit.

Rubio said at a news conference that Iceland had long served as “a critical outpost for monitoring clandestine behaviour and deterring our adversaries”.

He arrived in Reykjavik on Monday and has held talks with Icelandic Prime Minister Kristrun Frostadottir and top diplomat Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir.

They covered topics including geothermal energy, data centres and the pharmaceutical industry.

With competition on the rise in the Arctic, Iceland has regained status as a strategic player, even as the island continues to rely heavily on the US for security.

“For decades this nation, Iceland, has occupied a critical strategic position for our collective security and that remains true today more than ever before,” Rubio said.

At the start of September, Trump sparked new controversy by sharing an AI-generated map that appeared to show all of North America, the Caribbean, Greenland and Iceland as “the US of America.” In response, Reykjavik summoned the US ambassador and called the image “wholly inappropriate”.

Gunnarsdottir said yesterday the issue had now been dealt with and she also welcomed the US deal with Greenland, adding that her country would continue strengthening ties with Washington.

Trump again signalled his obsession with Greenland on Sunday, posting on his Truth Social platform an AI-generated image of his face looming over what appears to be its landscape, accompanied by the words “Hello, Greenland!”

Icelanders voted in late August 52.8% to 47.2% against resuming negotiations on joining the EU, which have been frozen since 2013.

Since gaining independence in 1944, Iceland has never had a military. It relies on Nato for its security and on a bilateral defence pact signed with the US in 1951.

Washington does not have a permanent base in Iceland, but is looking to consolidate its control over Arctic access routes coveted by Russia and China.

Later yesterday, Rubio left Iceland for Athens where he will participate in a “strategic dialogue” with Nato member Greece on regional and energy security, the State Department said.

The wars in Iran and Ukraine have laid bare the fragility of energy supply chains, and Greece is positioning itself to become a key hub in southeastern Europe for natural gas transport.

The visit follows media reports about possible conflicts of interest involving the US ambassador to Greece, Kimberly Guilfoyle, a former fiancée of Donald Trump Jr. and ex-wife of California Governor Gavin Newsom.

In a letter addressed to Rubio, Congressman Gregory Meeks sought clarification of a Wall Street Journal report alleging that Guilfoyle had stated the US could create “political change” in European countries.

Rubio later wraps up his European tour with a brief stop in Lisbon.

US firm bags deal after boss joins Project Meridian

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump was expected yesterday to announce the creation of a new submarine shipyard by a defence firm whose co-founder is heading a new Pentagon war study alongside Elon Musk.

Defence technology firm Anduril and the US government will jointly invest \$6.6bn in the facility in Baltimore, Maryland, which will build critical components for Virginia-class nuclear-powered subs, the White House said.

The announcement comes days after Anduril’s 34-year-old co-founder, Palmer Luckey, was unveiled as a leader of Project Meridian, a new Pentagon study on the future of war with SpaceX and Tesla tycoon Musk.

Trump will speak at the site on the outskirts of Baltimore later yesterday, part of his intensive programme of US travel as he tries to convince voters on the economy ahead of the midterms.

“Today’s \$6.6bn investment represents the president’s commitment to restoring American maritime dominance by constructing new vessels in communities like Baltimore,” White House Spokeswoman Anna Kelly told reporters.

The US is trying to speed up the production of submarines and other vessels as the Iran war and its effect on oil traffic underscore the importance of naval power.

Anduril said it would be investing \$3.7bn in the plant, which will manufacture components including torpedo tubes and eventually larger parts of the submarine hull. The firm is better known for

‘Today’s \$6.6bn investment represents the president’s commitment to restoring American maritime dominance by constructing new vessels in communities like Baltimore,’ – White House Spokeswoman Anna Kelly

making autonomous technology including drone “ghost ships”.

But Anduril’s president, Chris Brose, told reporters the “main focus right now” of the new yard was building the parts for Virginia-class subs rather than making any new drone craft.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth announced last week that Luckey, who is famous for wearing Hawai-

ian shirts to work, would be working with Musk, who returns to government after serving as head of the cost-cutting Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in 2025. He said it would be “an effort led by America’s best minds to study the future of warfare”.

The US Navy says it currently has 26 Virginia-class submarines with two more expected to enter service in 2027, but American shipyards are struggling to meet production targets set at two new boats each year.

The US also said recently it will sell Australia used Virginia-class subs as part of its AUKUS deal, instead of new ones as it tries to keep up the pace domestically.

The Virginia-class submarines are attack submarines that can fire Tomahawk missiles at targets. They are not part of the US nuclear deterrent system.

Californians blast Trump remark that Iran could ‘take out’ Los Angeles, San Diego

Reuters
Los Angeles

President Donald Trump suggested to a crowd of his supporters in Nebraska that Iran could “take out” a major US city like Los Angeles or San Diego, drawing a swift rebuke from California’s Democratic leaders and some fellow Republicans.

Trump, speaking at a political rally in the state’s farm belt on Monday, discussed American wartime economic sacrifices and said he was determined to “see a tremendous victory, because it verifies all the things we did.”

“And again, remember, with the war, it’s just artificial, it’s a little bit high, it’s a small price to pay,” he told the crowd in Grand Island, Nebraska, apparently referring to rising prices of fuel, fertiliser and

other products attributed to energy market disruptions from the war.

“It’s a small price to pay for keeping the world safe, for keeping our country safe. They could take out a city. Let ‘em take out Los Angeles, let ‘em take out San Diego. This is a very small price to pay, and it’s going to be over with very soon,” he said.

“It’s essentially almost over with,” Trump went on. “But it’s going to end very soon, and it’s going to end one way or the other.”

Yesterday, the White House dismissed criticism of the remark. “The media freakout over President Trump’s comments is not rooted in reality. He was clearly stating US cities would have been threatened if a nuclear Iran hadn’t been stopped,” White House Director of Communications Ste-

ven Cheung said in a social media post. “America is safer because of the President. Iran has no nuclear, no navy, no air force, and no money.”

Trump has shrugged off cost-of-living concerns stemming from the Iran conflict before, and he previously downplayed his concerns about the potential for Iran or its allies to launch an attack on US soil.

The comment in rural Nebraska, a state Trump won with more than 55% of the vote in the 2024 presidential election, targeted Democratic-run cities in California, a solidly Democratic state the president often criticises.

Monday’s comments prompted a backlash from California officials.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, denounced the Republican president as

“deranged and dangerous.”

“After sending the National Guard and Marines to occupy California, Donald Trump is now saying our foreign enemies should ‘take out’ Los Angeles and San Diego,” he wrote on X.

Newsom, who has positioned himself as a major political foil to Trump and is seen as a potential 2028 presidential candidate, juxtaposed a video clip of Trump in Nebraska with mention of the president’s previous rhetoric to justify deploying US military troops to Los Angeles and other cities to fight crime and enforce immigration.

California’s early voting for the November midterm elections started on Monday. The president’s Republican Party has hoped to win more races in the state in recent years, including this year’s gubernatorial election.

Newsom championed the redrawing of California’s congressional map last year to favor Democrats in this year’s election after Trump pushed for conservative-led Texas to redraw its map to boost Republicans.

One of the Republicans running in a competitive race in a redrawn California district near San Diego, Jim Desmond, distanced himself from Trump’s remarks.

“I vehemently disagree with President Trump’s comments. America must stand up to Iran and defend our interests, but the first responsibility of our Commander in Chief is to protect the American people and our homeland,” he wrote on X. “No American city is expendable, and no American family should ever be treated as collateral damage.”

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, a Democrat and former member of

Congress, likewise chided Trump for his comments.

“The president of the US suggested that a foreign government attack Los Angeles. His statements against our city are dangerous and could potentially compromise our safety,” Bass said in a statement.

Los Angeles and San Diego rank as the largest and second-largest cities in California by population.

More than 115,000 active-duty service members are also stationed in San Diego, including Naval Base San Diego, the largest on the United States’ west coast.

“My constituents – including many active duty service members, veterans, and their families – are not acceptable collateral damage in Trump’s stupid war,” US Representative Sara Jacobs, a Democrat, said in a social media post.

Activists demand amnesty for protesters as Thailand marks 1976 massacre

AFP
Bangkok

Activists called for amnesty for people prosecuted under Thailand's strict royal insult law yesterday, during a ceremony marking 50 years since a massacre of demonstrators protesting dictatorship.

A small group shouted "Amnesty 112" from a balcony at Bangkok's Thammasat University, an AFP reporter saw, as around 300 people including politicians and survivors gathered to commemorate the October 6, 1976, killings on the campus.

Under Section 112 of Thailand's criminal code — which was tight-



A woman places a flower on a monument to mark the 50th anniversary of the Thammasat University massacre on October 6, 1976, during the annual commemoration ceremony for the event at Thammasat University in Bangkok yesterday. (AFP)

ened after the 1976 massacre — anyone convicted of insulting, defaming or threatening the king or his family can face a prison sentence of up to 15 years per offence.

Legal observers and rights campaigners say the law is interpreted so broadly that it has become a tool to target dissent.

Nearly 300 people have been charged under the so-called lese majeste law since 2020, including many young people who took part in large-scale protests that year to demand democratic change and reform of the monarchy.

The Thammasat crackdown 50 years ago followed the return from exile of military dictator Thanom Kittikachorn, who had been ousted three years earlier.

Students had gathered to oppose his return. Police and right-wing groups stormed the campus, shooting, beating and lynching protesters.

The official death toll was 46, although survivors and witnesses believe more than 100 were killed. No state official has been held accountable.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul was represented at Tuesday's ceremony at the university memorial by a junior minister.

"Today we pay tribute and express our condolences for the lives lost," Minister Paradorn Prisananatakul told AFP after laying a wreath.

Asked why the government never held its own service for the

victims, he did not answer directly, saying that "the most important lesson from the October incident, on the government side, is to open the floor to everyone who has different opinions, so they can express their voices".

Thammasat survivor Wattana Chaichanasakul had earlier read out the names of those killed, a tradition observed every year.

It is to "remind ourselves that we will never forget our friends because if we do, it means we kill them again", she told the audience.

Current student Thanoporn Singlee, 21, said it was important to mark the anniversary because "Thammasat was a place where people died because of the government".

UK likely to expel Israeli diplomats, sources say

Reuters
Tel Aviv

Britain is likely to expel Israeli diplomats if Israel carries out its order to shut the British consulate in East Jerusalem this week in a dispute over sanctions targeting Israeli settlements, four sources said.

Israel on September 8 ordered Britain to close the East Jerusalem consulate within 30 days and remove its diplomats from the city, after Britain said it would impose a ban on trade of goods made in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The 30-day deadline for Britain to close the consulate ends on Thursday, which will impact around 30 British diplomats who work there, along with their family members, the sources said.

If the consulate is closed, Britain is likely to respond by expelling a similar number of Israeli diplomats from Israel's embassy to the United Kingdom, the sources said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

If the consulate is closed, Britain is likely to respond by expelling a similar number of Israeli diplomats from Israel's embassy to the United Kingdom, sources say

The sources did not say how quickly Britain would act if the consulate closes. After Britain announced the sanctions, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar accused London of interfering in this month's Israeli general election.

The British foreign office and the Israeli foreign ministry declined to comment. An Israeli official said any action against Israel would be met with a response.

The British sanctions announcement, and Israel's response, marked a new low in the relationship between the once steadfast allies. Britain has repeatedly criticised Israel over its actions in the war in Gaza and over Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians. Israel's government has accused Britain's governing Labour party of being hostile towards Israel.

The British consulate, in the

Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, handles the country's relations with Palestinians in the city as well as in the West Bank and Gaza. It also provides consular services to Palestinians.

The consulate has been in Jerusalem for almost 200 years, long before the State of Israel was established in 1948.

Reuters reported on Monday that Britain's top national security adviser, Jonathan Powell, had quietly visited Israel last week in a bid to keep the consulate open but failed to reach an agreement. A fifth source said Britain was still hopeful an agreement could be reached.

Two other sources said that Britain has asked European countries to raise the issue with Israel in hope of convincing the government to reverse its decision.

A spokesperson for Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar told

Reuters on Monday the consulate would close on Thursday.

In announcing the sanctions, Britain said that Israel's actions were undermining the possibility of a two-state solution — the idea of a Palestinian state co-existing peacefully alongside Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government openly rejects the idea of Palestinian statehood.

Britain, which recognised the State of Palestine last year, cited Israeli government-backed projects to expand settlements and rising settler attacks targeting Palestinians in the West Bank. The British sanctions are to take effect next year.

France and Canada joined in announcing sanctions. Israel has not taken action against Paris or Ottawa.

The incident highlighted growing frustration among Israel's longtime allies over its settlements in the occupied West Bank, territory Israel captured in a 1967 war. Nearly all countries and all UN bodies view the settlements as illegal under international law, which Israel disputes.



Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi stands atop a barricade during a protest organised by opposition parties demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in New Delhi, yesterday. (Reuters)

India opposition leaders briefly detained in protest

AFP
New Delhi

Indian police briefly detained opposition leader Rahul Gandhi yesterday during a protest march to demand the resignation of the country's election chief over a large-scale revision of voter lists.

An AFP reporter saw Gandhi, a senior leader of the main opposition Congress Party, standing on a police barricade and waving the national flag.

Officers detained him along with other lawmakers but released them soon after.

The revision of voter lists has drawn criticism over alleged irregularities in the decision-making process, with opposition politicians accusing the election commission of acting at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Critics also say the drive has disproportionately affected marginalised and minority communities, especially Muslims.

The Election Commission of India has rejected allegations of wrongdoing, saying the revision process is aimed at ensuring the accuracy and integrity of electoral rolls.

Yesterday, opposition members began a march from parliament towards the commission's headquarters, but were stopped by a heavy police presence.

Gandhi and his lawmaker sister Piyanka Gandhi Vadra later camped inside the public radio's offices adjacent to the election commission.

"The country has been hijacked by Narendra Modi through vote theft," Gandhi told reporters from behind the iron gates of the public radio building.

"What has been done to our country is called treason. Nobody is going to escape."

Modi's party has defended the drive.

"Some opposition parties, particularly the Congress, are making a concerted effort to change the government and install Rahul Gandhi in power," party spokesman Sambit Patra told reporters yesterday.

"They are deliberately attacking India's democracy and constitutional institutions."

The protest is part of a wider campaign against revision of electoral rolls, reignited by a report last month by The Indian Express newspaper.

The report said that two of the election commission's three members had formally objected at least 14 times to key decisions linked to the revision, and that the names of 130mn citizens had been deleted since the exercise began in 2025.

Protests began on Friday, demanding that commission chief Gyanesh Kumar step down.

"Gyanesh, it's done, bro," placards read at the protest yesterday, alongside signs alleging electoral manipulation.

Opposition leaders pressed their demands for greater transparency, alleging that changes to the voter rolls could disenfranchise eligible voters.

Kumar has not commented publicly.

The election commission says the revision exercise is intended to identify fraudulently registered voters and prevent "foreign illegal immigrants" from voting.

The youth-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a satirical political movement that emerged online in May and succeeded in its campaign to oust the then education minister, has called for "mass mobilisation" in the capital on Saturday.

Major student groups aligned with left-wing parties have also said they would join Saturday's protest.

India's Supreme Court on Monday ordered the government and the election body to explain decisions linked to the revision exercise. Another hearing is expected to be held next week.

Malaysia says around 10,000 Myanmar nationals sent home since January

Reuters
Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday that around 10,000 Myanmar nationals have been sent back to their country since January, part of efforts to repatriate refugees who fled a civil war.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since a 2021 coup triggered a nationwide civil war, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to cross its borders into neighbouring countries.

Malaysia has taken in around 193,000 refugees from Myanmar, according to UN data, but it has grown increasingly frustrated by their presence, saying that host-

ing them has become a financial burden and a security risk.

Malaysia is not a party to the UN refugee convention, and regards asylum-seekers as illegal migrants.

Anwar told parliament yesterday that some of those repatriated were sent back by planes arranged by the Myanmar government, while around 1,400 were returned by sea last week as part of a bilateral arrangement.

Anwar acknowledged concerns from rights groups and some lawmakers over the potential safety risks faced by those being repatriated, but said Myanmar authorities had given assurances that they would not be harmed upon their return.

"The conditions that we placed on (Myanmar) is that they must



Myanmar migrants repatriated from Malaysia sit together at a temple during their official welcoming process in Thanlyin on Sunday. (AFP)

bring home their citizens. Secondly, is that they treat their people fairly so that there are no abuses, coercion or rights violations," Anwar said.

Anwar said he would continue to discuss the matter with Myanmar's leader President Min Aung Hlaing, who is due to visit Kuala Lumpur this month.

Indonesia collects \$190mn in fines over forestry violations

Indonesian authorities have collected \$190mn in fines from companies working illegally in forestry areas, and seized more than 6.2mn hectares of land, the attorney general announced yesterday.

Indonesia features regularly among the countries with the largest annual forest loss, NGOs have said, with mining, plantations and fires causing the clearance of large tracts of its lush rainforest. President Prabowo Subianto established a task force last year to enforce

forest protection laws and go after companies, including palm oil and mining firms, found to be in violation of the rules.

The task force can impose and collect fines and reclaim forest land found to have been used illegally. Yesterday, the task force handed over 13.24tn rupiah (\$740mn) recovered from violating companies, attorney general Sanitiar Burhanuddin told reporters in Jakarta.

The amount included 3.4tn rupiah in fines, with the remaining sum coming from taxes and

earnings. Sanitiar said the task force had seized more than 6.2mn hectares of forest area in eight separate operations since last year from non-compliant companies and individuals.

Another 14,600 hectares were recovered from illegal mining operations. More than 140,000 hectares from the latest seizure will be given to the forestry ministry to be managed by state-owned palm oil company Agrinas Palma Nusantara, while another 118,000 hectares will be reforested, said Sanitiar. (AFP)

Seoul weighs steps to force N Korea landmine apology

Republic of Korea is considering measures to force an apology from North Korea over a recent landmine blast that injured three soldiers inside the Demilitarised Zone, its defence ministry said yesterday.

A joint Korean-UN investigation concluded that two landmines that exploded in the DMZ last month were planted by North Korean forces about a year ago, prompting Seoul to demand an official apology.

It has also called on the nuclear-armed North to remove any other mines planted on the southern side of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) that runs through the DMZ, the heavily fortified frontier that has divided the Korean Peninsula since the 1953 armistice.

Pyongyang has denied respon-

sibility, with Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korea's leader, slamming the call for an apology as "despicable".

"We are not ruling out any options or prejudging anything when it comes to additional measures," defence ministry spokeswoman Chung Bin-na told reporters Tuesday when asked if steps were being planned to force an apology from Pyongyang.

Bin-na did not offer specifics about what actions might be employed.

Landmine incidents in the DMZ have previously heightened tensions between the two Koreas, which remain technically at war.

Seoul concluded at the time that North Korean troops had crossed the MDL to plant the mines, an accusation Pyongyang denied. (AFP)

Landmine accusation deserves 'punishment': N Korea

AFP
Seou

A Korean investigation that concluded North Korea was to blame for landmine blasts inside the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) last month was a violation of sovereignty, Pyongyang said yesterday, warning of "sure punishment".

The statement from the North's foreign ministry came hours after Seoul said it was considering measures to force an apology over the blasts, which injured three Korean soldiers.

A joint Korea-UN investigation whose findings were released Monday concluded that the landmines had been placed inside the Demilitarised Zone by North

Korean forces about a year ago, something Pyongyang has denied.

Seoul called on the nuclear-armed North to remove any other mines planted on the southern side of the Military Demarcation Line that runs through the DMZ, the heavily fortified frontier that has divided the Korean Peninsula since the 1953 armistice.

The North Korean foreign ministry yesterday called the investigation results a "grave provocation never to be overlooked and a wanton violation of our sovereignty that deserves sure punishment".

The statement carried by state media went on to label the landmine accusations a "premeditated farce" that created a "new danger of war".

"If a jackboot or a spark of fire

from (South Korea) goes even a millimetre beyond the border to violate our territory, the border guard forces of (North Korea) will take an immediate and powerful counteraction," it said.

Seoul's military said earlier it was weighing unspecified actions aimed at forcing an apology from Pyongyang.

"We are not ruling out any options or prejudging anything when it comes to additional measures," defence ministry spokeswoman Chung Bin-na told reporters yesterday.

Landmine incidents in the DMZ have previously heightened tensions between the two Koreas, which remain technically at war.

In 2015, two Korean soldiers were seriously wounded in a landmine blast on the southern

side of the DMZ, with one losing both legs.

Seoul concluded at the time that North Korean troops had crossed the Military Demarcation Line to plant the mines, an accusation Pyongyang denied.

Since 2024, Pyongyang's military has laid mines and built anti-tank barriers along the frontier as part of efforts to permanently seal it off.

During the operation, North Korea also blew up the northern sections of inter-Korean roads no longer in use.

In its Tuesday statement, the North Korean foreign ministry argued that the latest blast was being used by Seoul "to brand our fortification of the southern border... as a 'military invasion' and delay" it.

Dizzying AI outlays, productivity doubts and investor concerns

Big money has been pouring into AI projects across the world for quite some time now. It can't help growing even bigger. Cumulative spending globally on data centres alone could top \$30tn by 2050, according to a projection by PwC, almost matching the value of outstanding US Treasuries.

It "dwarfs" what was spent in the late-19th-century railroad, or late-1990s dotcom booms, even after adjusting for inflation, PwC said. AI infrastructure spending in the US is projected to reach approximately 1.9% of GDP -- over \$581bn -- in 2026, according to estimates from Goldman Sachs. Longer term, it's projected to average 3.6% of GDP annually through 2032 in broader infrastructure forecasts.

Global AI spending accounts for roughly 0.9% of global GDP in 2026, projected to rise to 1.4% by 2028. According to Goldman Sachs Research, total worldwide AI investments -- encompassing data centers,

infrastructure, and enterprise/private deployments -- are expected to exceed \$1tn, representing a substantial share of worldwide economic output.

But lurking behind the dizzying projections and huge outlays by AI companies, alongside sky-high valuations, lie assumptions about vast broad-based productivity gains and future profits with little evidence so far - or historical precedent - to be sure they can deliver, according to economists.

JP Morgan wrote in August that broad-based productivity gains in the US, which leads the AI race, "remain elusive", raising questions about the sustainability of AI valuations. A Bain & Company study said productivity gains from existing markets would not be enough to justify current outlays and "entirely new markets must emerge to close the funding gap", suggesting those could range from using AI-guided robots to developing new materials for batteries and semiconductors.

Few doubt the potential of AI to transform everything from work in an office to research labs, just as past revolutions shrank journey times from days to hours or connected the world at the touch of a keyboard. What seems more immutable is the math behind securing a return on investment or the deadlines for repaying loans, leaving economists to work out the implications for the global economy beyond the ups and downs of investment cycles.

"Historical precedent suggests that technology-driven booms often end when infrastructure buildouts cease to deliver sufficient returns," according to JP Morgan.

For the US alone -- which, according to some estimates, accounts for about three quarters of the global AI spending total -- investment will run as high as about \$9tn from 2025 to 2032, equivalent to spending 3.2% of US GDP each year, according to Columbia Business School economist Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh.

He estimates the US AI sector would need to generate about \$3.55tn in annual revenue by 2032 to earn a 10% return on investment. It earns a fraction of that now. In a wider sense, there are two schools of thought. The first dismisses serial scare stories about the power of AI as merely hype to build excitement around upcoming initial public offerings, according to Mike Dolan, a columnist for Reuters.

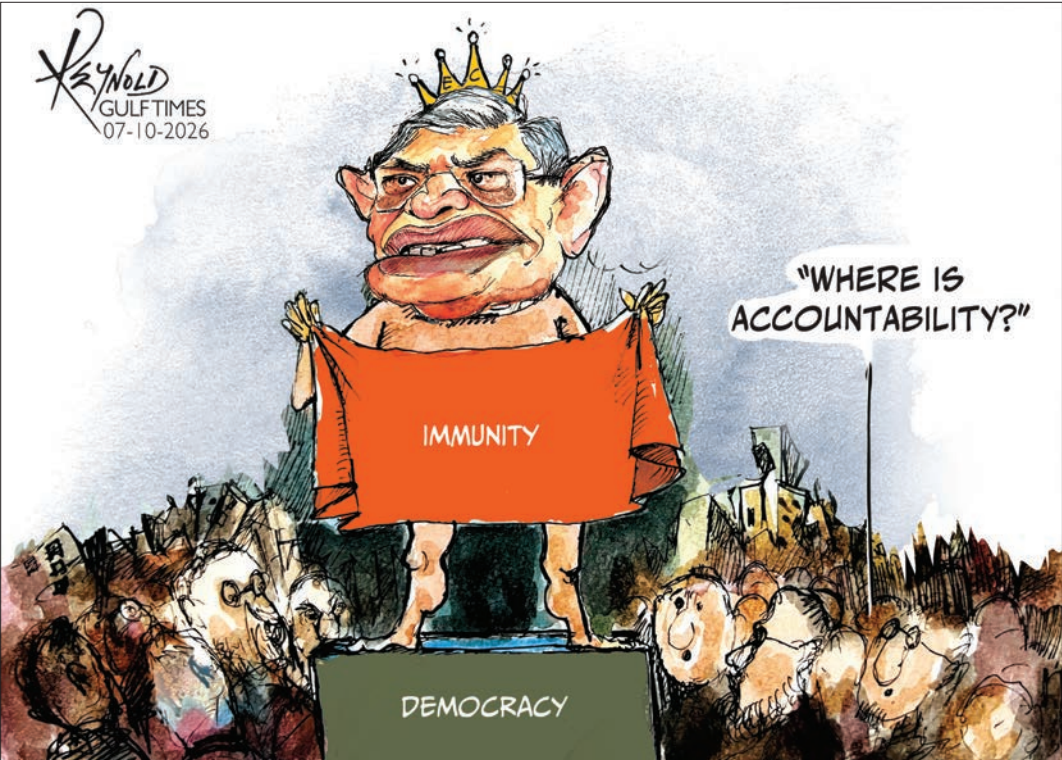
The other is that AI development is now too big to fail strategically, and governments have no option but to press ahead if economic, financial and even military security is threatened.

Going forward, AI may not be all about weapons of mass destruction in the "Science vs-Nature Frankenstein" conflicts. With ample guardrails, it clearly has numerous positives, from accelerating the search for disease cures to even clean nuclear energy. To be sure, the Big Tech and governments will fiercely resist falling behind in the race.

Rubio on the rounds



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Iceland's Foreign Minister Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir and US Ambassador to Iceland Billy Long tour a US Navy P-8 Poseidon aircraft at Keflavik Air Base in Iceland yesterday. (Reuters)



The mystery surrounding plague research institute worker's death?

By Andrew Osborn and Jennifer Rigby
Reuters/Moscow

A laboratory worker at a plague research institute in Siberia fell ill and died in undisclosed circumstances on October 2, prompting authorities to quarantine about 200 people and causing public health fears on social media. Here's what we know about the case, which officials have not linked to her work or plague, and about the disease she studied.

Russian media named the victim as Darya Shipilova, a 28-year-old laboratory worker at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East. The authorities said she died of an unknown type of pneumonia but that as a precaution they quarantined everyone who had come into contact with her.

Unconfirmed reports of how she fell ill have circulated on social media. One version said she had dropped a test tube containing live bacteria at work, a theory rejected by Russia's

health watchdog. Another said she became sick after travelling to Thailand. A third said she fell ill after going to an area near the border with Mongolia. There is no evidence in the public domain to support any of those theories.

There is no confirmation she died from plague although one regional governor said she "may" have died from plague. Health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said she died of an unknown type of pneumonia and that no relevant pathogens had been found in anyone who came into contact with her. Elena Sofina, a local official in Siberia, said 60% of those quarantined had since been released. Local media said about 200 were initially quarantined.

Sofina said "a dangerous diagnosis" had not been confirmed. Plague circulates mainly among small animals and fleas. Caused by the bacterium Yersinia pestis, it can also infect humans. Outbreaks include the "Black Death", which killed over 50mn people in Europe in the 1300s.

It is transmitted between animals and humans by the bite of infected fleas, inhalation of infected respiratory particles and -- rarely

-- ingestion of infectious materials. The disease's mortality rate is 30%-100% if left untreated. If identified quickly, plague can be treated with antibiotics.

HOW COMMON IS PLAGUE?

Plague is endemic in many African countries, the former Soviet Union, the Americas and Asia, but most human cases in the last six years were reported from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar, according to the World Health Organization. Plague is endemic to Siberia, location of the first known prehistoric human outbreak, as Yersinia pestis is present there among small wild mammals and their fleas. It's rare for Russians to have plague.

US President Donald Trump said the laboratory worker's death was a "big problem for Russia" and offered to help Moscow deal with it. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Russia should share more information about the death.

The WHO in Geneva said Russia had told it there were no plague cases in the city of Irkutsk. Reuters could not establish whether this meant plague could

be ruled out in the lab worker's case. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan said they were stepping up precautionary measures at their borders to guard against the possible spread of infectious diseases.

The Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East was set up in 1934 to control plague outbreaks. Its founding scientist helped quell outbreaks in Siberia, Mongolia and China, its website says. It later worked with other dangerous diseases including cholera and anthrax.

TYPES OF PLAGUE

Plague comes in three forms affecting different parts of the body. Pneumonic plague, the most virulent and least common form, is an infection of the lungs which prompts patients to cough out infectious airborne droplets.

Bubonic plague is the most common form, occurring chiefly when an infected flea bites a person, and causes swollen lymph nodes or "buboes". Septicemic plague, which does not spread from person to person, occurs when plague bacteria multiply in the blood.

One form of plague can develop into another.

Infected persons usually start with flu-like symptoms after an incubation period of one to seven days. They experience fever, chills, head and body aches and weakness, vomiting and nausea. The Covid-19 pandemic heightened concerns about the risk of new deadly diseases emerging, and reports of clusters of unknown illness or laboratory accidents now cause panic online.

Most scientists believe the coronavirus that caused Covid-19 came from animals, but some have suggested a lab leak caused it. Public health experts have urged caution about the incident in Siberia, saying only one case has been reported and that Russian authorities say there is no evidence the lab worker was infected with plague. -- Reuters



A satellite image shows the Anti-Plague Institute of Siberia and the Far East in Irkutsk, Russia. (Reuters)

US midterms: 470 seats, \$12bn and one absent president

Americans go to the polls on November 3 for elections that will shape the final two years of Donald Trump's presidency -- although the president himself will not be on any ballot. The "midterms," held halfway through a president's four-year term, decide control of Congress as well as governorships and thousands of state-level offices.

A Democratic takeover of either chamber would constrain Trump's agenda and bring greater congressional scrutiny of his administration; Republican victories would preserve the party's control in Washington. Here is a look at the 2026 showdown by the numbers:

- House of Representatives**
- 435: Every seat in the House, the lower chamber of Congress, is contested every two years.
- 218: The magic number for a majority in the 435-seat chamber.
- 3: The net number of seats Democrats need to gain from the 2024 election result to take control. Republicans won a 220-215 majority then, although deaths, resignations and a party switch mean the current House stands at 218 Republicans, 214 Democrats, one independent and two vacancies. For Republicans, that means a net loss of two seats is survivable. Three is not.
- Senate and the states**
- 35: Senate seats being contested -- 33 in the normal six-year rotation plus special elections in Florida and Ohio. Republicans hold a 53-47 advantage in the 100-seat chamber, counting two independents who vote with the Democrats. Democrats therefore need a net gain of four seats to reach the 51 required for control; a 50-50 tie would be broken by Republican Vice-President JD Vance.
- 36: States electing governors, nearly three-quarters of the total.
- 6,139: State legislative seats being regularly contested, across 88 of the country's 99 state legislative chambers.

- What the polls say**
- 53-41%: The Democratic advantage over Republicans among registered voters asked which party's congressional candidate they would support, in a PBS News/NPR/Marist poll conducted September 14-15. The same survey found Democrats ahead among independent voters by 57% to 32%. 32-41%: The range of Trump's approval rating in several major September surveys. Reuters/Ipsos put him at 32% among US adults, the lowest of his political career, while Marist recorded 39% and NBC News 41% among registered voters. The surveys use different methodologies and populations, so the figures are not directly comparable -- but none suggests an abundance of presidential coattails.
- 55%: Registered voters who told NBC News that Trump's policies had hurt the economy, against 26% who said they had helped it.
- Money, money, money**
- About \$12bn: The amount expected to be spent advertising on the 2025-26 election cycle. Ad-tracking company AdImpact forecasts \$11.6bn, exceeding both the previous midterm record of \$8.9bn in 2022 and even the 2024 presidential cycle.
- Kinetiq Political Insights' latest estimate is slightly higher at \$11.96bn, with a projected range of \$11.5bn to \$12.5bn.
- \$330mn: Advertising spending in the California governor's primary alone, according to AdImpact -- making the preliminary contest to choose November's candidates the most expensive gubernatorial race on record. And that was merely the warm-up. (AFP)

Sharif urges Imran Khan supporters to end protest march

AFP
Islamabad

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged the party of Imran Khan yesterday to call off a protest march moving through the country's northwest towards Islamabad and re-enter negotiations with the government.

Supporters of the jailed former prime minister began the march on Sunday, demanding Khan's release after several rounds of talks with authorities aimed at de-escalation stalled.

"I still ask them to come to their senses. End your long marches and sit-ins. Once you end them, we will certainly sit down with you and talk," Sharif said, referring to the leadership of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

The Pakistani premier also warned of the demonstration's negative impact on the economy, saying



Supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf take part in a march in Kohat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province yesterday. (AFP)

that undermining the government's economic efforts "would amount to hostility toward the state".

"We will not allow this to happen. The law will take its course. Protecting the lives and property of the people is our responsibility, and we will ensure this by all means," Sharif said.

Authorities have been preparing for weeks for the possible arrival of demonstrators in Islamabad, with the march originally slated for September 27 and then postponed until Sunday.

An AFP journalist saw thousands of people take to the streets on Monday in support of Khan in Ko-

hat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is ruled by PTI.

Khan, a hugely popular former cricket star, has been behind bars since August 2023 and faces scores of charges ranging from corruption to treason and inciting violence, following widespread anti-establishment riots in May of that year.

Pakistan a 'trusted' mediator between US and Iran: UN Chief

AFP
Islamabad

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said yesterday Pakistan had acted as a crucial mediator between the United States and Iran, and urged an end to the Middle East war.

The UN chief said Islamabad's mediation between Washington and Tehran aimed at ending the war showed "Pakistan is trusted and is trusted even by countries that are at odds with each other".

Pakistan brokered a June accord that led to a brief halt in fighting between the United States and Iran and set a roadmap for further agreement on reopening the crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway, and for negotiations on Tehran's nuclear programme.

"We can only wish that the efforts of Pakistan will go on and that they will be successful and will finally see peace in the Mid-



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres shaking hands with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar upon his arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad. (AFP)

dle East," Guterres told reporters in Islamabad.

"I want to send a loud and clear message to all parties: end the conflict, return to diplomacy, fully restore navigational rights and freedoms in accordance with international law," he said.

Former German spy chief arrested for attempted treason

Reuters
Berlin

Former German spy chief August Hanning was detained yesterday on suspicion of attempted treason in a case that ranks among Germany's biggest intelligence scandals since the Cold War.

Prosecutors accused him of paying for secret documents and using them in an analysis for a foreign spy service. They did not identify the intelligence service and it was not immediately clear whether the analysis reached its intended recipient.

The arrest of a former head of Germany's foreign intelligence is unprecedented and could damage the country's intelligence relationships with allied nations, according to a senior security lawmaker.

"Hanning is strongly suspected of treasonous espionage, obtaining state secrets, attempted treason and espionage," the prosecutor's office said in a statement.

Hanning did not respond to a request for comment from Reuters. The chancellery declined to comment.

Five years after his seven-year tenure as head of the BND foreign intelligence service ended in 2005, Hanning agreed with a former BND office manager to receive confidential intelligence information in exchange for payment, according to prosecutors.

The office manager, identified as Manfred D. in line with privacy rules, was also arrested yesterday, and both were due to appear before a judge at the Federal Court of Justice.

Manfred D. served as office manager to successive BND presidents until March 2026, potentially giving him access to some of Germany's most current intelligence at the time that prosecutors say documents were being siphoned from the service.

Prosecutors said D. is suspected of having supplied around 2,000 documents over the years, including classified material intended solely for internal use within the BND and senior-level intelligence briefings at the chancellery.

Those included documents relating to the Iranian nuclear programme and the Russian military, as well as highly sensitive material classified as secret by allied intelligence agencies in other countries, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) newspaper reported.

Prosecutors said Hanning had used classified information supplied by D. to prepare an analysis for an officer of a foreign intelligence service and for years shared political information with a representative of the spy agency.

The case does not involve Russia, according to information obtained by *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*.

Tens of thousands demand better education in France

AFP
Paris

A quarter of a million demonstrators took to the streets across France yesterday as unions and teachers joined high school students demanding better learning conditions in protests that later descended into sporadic clashes with security forces.

Students have blocked the entrances to hundreds of high schools for 15- to 17-year-olds since late September, complaining of missing teachers, overloaded timetables, dilapidated classrooms and buildings that cannot cope with rising temperatures.

Rights groups, unions and the students have accused authorities of using disproportionate force. A teenager lost a hand on Monday after police fired a stun grenade, while another student reportedly lost several teeth last week after being struck by a police launcher round.

At Paris's Place de la Republique, protesters gathered beneath banners demanding better-funded schools.

Two men in climbing gear scaled the nearby monument, where they unfurled a plastic banner reading "Neglected schools, sacrificed youth".

"Gen Z has risen up and wants to be heard," 19-year-old Lilia told AFP at a massive march in central Paris, adding she hoped President Emmanuel Macron would listen.

The unrest comes ahead of a 2027 election to choose Macron's successor, with far-right candidate



French CRS riot police charge protesters amid clashes at Place de la Nation during a demonstration by high school and university students, supported by teachers' union and school parents, in Paris, yesterday. (Reuters)

Marine Le Pen riding high in the polls despite a graft conviction.

An AFP reporter described the Paris march as largely peaceful, but tensions flared near its endpoint in the east of the capital as police fired tear gas and some demonstrators threw rocks at a line of officers carrying riot shields.

Police officials said that "300 hostile individuals" were attempting to confront officers.

Another AFP reporter saw a young man bleeding from a head wound being treated by volunteer medics.

The interior ministry said 256,000 people had joined demonstrations across France.

Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu condemned violence linked to the protests, telling lawmakers there was "no room for tolerance of violence".

"Burning down a high school does not improve the state of high

school buildings," he told parliament, rejecting accusations the government had ordered "police repression" against protesters.

While many protests have been peaceful, some demonstrators have started fires, destroyed bus shelters or clashed with riot police.

Police have responded with batons, tear gas and riot-control rounds.

The government says 215 students and 715 police officers have been injured since the start of the movement.

A 15-year-old lost a hand to a sting-ball grenade fired by riot officers in the northern town of Lens on Monday.

In Metz, prosecutors requested a police inquiry after video footage circulated appearing to show a plainclothes officer inappropriately touching a detained female pupil younger than 15.

The government has sought to address the students' grievanc-

es, while accusing the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) party of encouraging the movement.

Veteran LFI presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon has strongly supported the protests, while calling for non-violent methods.

Thomas, a 17-year-old student from the Paris suburb of Val-de-Marne, said some of the classrooms at his school were short of desks and chairs while the bathrooms lacked doors, toilet paper and soap.

"We just want better conditions for studying," he told AFP.

Adults turned out in droves yesterday to support the young demonstrators.

In Rennes, teacher Romain Dubourg said colleagues had discussed what they viewed as police brutality and decided to stand alongside pupils.

In Lyon, parents organised to support the youngsters, while teacher Rindala Younes said she wanted to help students "convey their message peacefully".

"The high school students' demands are legitimate," she said.

Amnesty International on Monday said the French authorities should "put an end to the disproportionate police repression seen in recent days during student protests".

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said police had opened 10 internal investigations into allegations of misconduct.

Since the start of the movement, 24 schools have been burned or ransacked, according to the education ministry.

Dan nominates Niculescu as Romanian PM

Romania's centrist President Nicusor Dan nominated Luca Niculescu as prime minister late on Monday in another attempt to end a protracted political crisis that has raised debt costs and pressured the country's investment-grade rating.

"I chose the person with the highest chances of reaching a (parliamentary majority) and (he) has the freedom to decide the governing formula — political, technocrat — after talks he will hold with political parties," Dan said on Monday evening.

"I have the guarantee that a government with Luca Niculescu will maintain Romania's pro-Western direction and will respect the financial targets and all the commitments that Romania has undertaken."

Niculescu, 55, a former journalist and later Romanian ambassador to France, is currently interim deputy foreign minister, in charge of Romania's ongoing accession process to the OECD.

He is Dan's fourth attempt at nominating a prime minister in the five months since a pro-European broad coalition government collapsed in a no-confidence vote.

Niculescu now has 10 days to put together a cabinet list and ask parliament for a vote of confidence. (Reuters)

Bulgaria searches for missing crew after drones hit more Black Sea ships

AFP
Sofia

Bulgarian authorities yesterday were searching for the missing crew of a ship that sank in the Black Sea after drones hit two vessels in what EU leaders condemned as an "unacceptable" attack.

The dual strike came a day after another ship caught fire and sank off the Romanian coast, killing one and leaving one missing. Ukraine said the drone attack was launched by Russia.

Black Sea shipping has been hit by growing fallout from the Ukraine-Russia war in recent months.

Early yesterday, "sea and air drones" attacked two merchant vessels, Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev said, adding that it was too soon to determine from which country the drones came.

A Bulgarian ferry that witnessed the explosion and rushed to the scene discovered overturned life rafts and life jackets near the ship that sank.

No crew members from that ship have been found, Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev told reporters. He did not specify how many people were missing.

Eighteen crew — 11 Turkish and seven Indian — were rescued from the other ship.

The attack within Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone "constitutes a flagrant violation of mari-



Crew members from a ship damaged in a drone attack disembark from a Bulgarian border police vessel in Varna, following a rescue operation after one vessel was sunk and another damaged in the Black Sea off Bulgaria, yesterday. (Reuters)

time law and, more broadly, of the rules of navigation", Radev said, adding it was "absolutely unacceptable".

A search operation was launched 70 nautical miles east of the coastal town of Byala, authorities said.

Both vessels are Turkish-owned, according to the Equasis merchant shipping database.

"The situation significantly complicates navigation in the Black Sea, drives up insurance premiums, and makes maritime traffic extremely difficult," Radev said before convening an emergency meeting of ministers.

The ship that sank was the Togolese-flagged Alfa Watan, ac-

cording to the Maritime.bg specialised website.

The second ship, the Able, registered in Palau, was set on fire.

Two of the rescued crew members were hospitalised, one suffering from burns and one from a head injury.

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen also called attacks on civilian shipping in the Black Sea "unacceptable".

"While exact circumstances of these incidents are still being established, the developments are very concerning," von der Leyen wrote online.

Romanian foreign minister Oana Toiu on X also "firmly" condemned the attack.

Spain approves housing decrees that triggered snap election

Reuters
Madrid

Spain's government yesterday approved two housing decrees whose rejection by parliament last week prompted Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez to call a snap election.

The measures, which include rent caps, a temporary ban on evictions and limits on corporate purchases of residential property, were "based on plain common sense", Sanchez said in a press conference, arguing that opinion surveys showed the public was broadly in favour of intervention in the property market.

"They protect the most vulnerable and, in some way, begin to bring order to what is currently a deeply dysfunctional market that does not operate according to the logic of supply and demand because of rampant speculation," he said.

Sanchez said on Monday he was bringing forward an election previously scheduled for 2027 because failing to garner enough support for his proposals to address a housing crisis made him realise he needed more seats in parliament.

Calling the election, on November 29, has allowed Sanchez to bring in the new rules with the support of a smaller caretaker body.

The measures will come into effect temporarily when the decree is published in the official state gazette but must then be sent for approval by the care-

"The legal uncertainty inherent in both decrees will result in a sharp slowdown in the limited investment secured to date in the construction of affordable housing"

taker lawmakers who remain in place after parliament was dissolved, Sanchez said.

The standing body of 69 members, when including lower house speaker Francina Armengol from Sanchez's Socialist Party, has a slim majority in favour of the measures, according to state broadcaster TVE.

A second decree proposing the automatic renewal of rental contracts would only come into effect if approved by the reduced legislature since the government did not have a majority to validate it, Sanchez said.

The interventionist measures will only serve to drive away the investment needed to increase supply, said Carolina Roca, president of the Association of Property Developers of Madrid.

"The legal uncertainty inherent in both decrees will result in a sharp slowdown in the limited investment secured to date in the construction of affordable housing," she said.

The attempted eviction of an 87-year-old woman in Madrid triggered nationwide protests including calls for a general strike before the election, which Sanchez said his government would respect.



Official partners, sponsors for Qatar Boat Show 2026 named

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the Qatar Boat Show organising committee announced the official partners and sponsors of the show's third edition at a press conference held at The Terminal in Old Doha Port.

The show will take place on November 4-7.

The press conference marked the signing of partnership and sponsorship agreements with leading organisations from the public and private sectors, representing a diverse range of industries.

The agreements reflect a shared commitment to growing Qatar's maritime sector, elevating its maritime tourism offering, and strengthening the country's standing on the global stage.

Old Doha Port chief executive Eng. Mohammed Abdulla al-Mulla, who is also the chairman of the Qatar Boat Show organising committee, said: "We are proud to see the third edition of Qatar Boat Show achieve notable growth,



Old Doha Port chief operating officer Eng. Mohamed al-Atwaan, who is also director of the Qatar Boat Show 2026 organising committee, with officials at the partnership and sponsorship agreement signing ceremonies.



which reflects the show's growing standing as a key platform for the maritime sector in Qatar and the region."

"This year, 70% of previous exhibitors from around the world are returning, either maintaining their exhibition space or expanding it through the launch of new brands," al-Mulla continued. "This edition also sees 30% growth in Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) participation compared with the previous edition,

along with new boat debuts, the presence of several government entities and national institutions, and companies taking part for the first time."

This year's partners include the Ministry of Transport as Strategic Partner, Al Kass Sports Channels as Strategic Media Partner, and Ooredoo Qatar as Official Telecommunications Partner.

Qatar Creates and the Doha Film Institute come together as the show's

Cultural Partner, joined by Bedaa Watches & Jewellery as Official Watch Sponsor and Nasser Bin Khaled Automobiles - Mercedes-Benz as Official Automotive Partner.

At the same time, Qatar Airways serves as Official Travel Partner, Mowasalat (Karwa) as Transport Partner, and The Ned Doha as Official Hospitality Partner for the VIP and VVIP Lounge.

Qatar Boat Show targets visitor record as local boat builders increase by 30%

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Boat Show expects a bigger third edition in November, with local boat builders' participation projected to rise 30% and organisers aiming to surpass last year's 27,000 visitors.

The four-day event, scheduled for November 4-7 at Old Doha Port, is expected to attract more exhibitors, international companies and boats, reflecting growing interest in Qatar's marine leisure and boating sector.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of a press conference announcing the sponsors and partners of the Qatar Boat Show, Old Doha Port chief operating officer Mohamed al-Atwaan said that organisers are anticipating a stronger turnout from both exhibitors and visitors.

"This year we are expecting a greater number of visitors and even a greater number of participants and exhibitors," he said, adding that further details about participating companies and the number of boats on display would be announced in the coming weeks.

A key highlight is the anticipated increase in local boat builders, whose participation is expected to grow by 30% compared with last year.

Al-Atwaan also said that more than 70% of last year's participants are returning for the upcoming edition, indicating continued interest in the event.

Organisers are also hoping to expand the international presence and display more boats, with details expected to be announced one to two weeks before the event.

The second edition welcomed more than 27,000 visitors over four days, setting a benchmark the organisers hope to exceed.

Beyond the exhibition itself, the programme will include side events and hospitality offerings designed to enhance the experience for visitors and exhibitors.

"Hopefully this year we break this record," al-Atwaan said, adding that the additional activities and hospitality would offer visitors "a different experience and an elevated one" at the third edition.

8th Festive Exhibition in Doha a vital bridge between Pakistan, Qatar textile industries: envoy

In a celebration of craftsmanship, heritage, and cross-border retail synergy, the 8th edition of "The Festive Exhibition" was held on Friday at Marriott Marquis, City Center Doha.

Organised by Boutique H, the one-day event was inaugurated by Pakistan's ambassador to Qatar Muhammad Aamer, marking a milestone in the evolving textile, garment, and fashion trade between the two nations.

The inauguration drew a distinguished roster of dignitaries, including Indonesia's ambassador to Qatar Syahda Guruh Langkah Samudera, Qatari entrepreneur Farhan al-Sheikh al-Sayed, trade and investment attaché at the Pakistan embassy Qurat Ul Ain Zafar, and Boutique H chief organiser Hina Faisal.

Pakistan Business Council Qatar (PBCQ) chairman Fawad Rana was also present, participating in the proceedings and underscoring the council's commitment to fostering bilateral commercial ties.

Following the ribbon-cutting, ambassador Aamer, alongside Faisal, Zafar and Rana, conducted a walkthrough of the exhibition and visited all 30 participating designers and brands, who had travelled specifically from Pakistan to showcase their latest collections.

The delegation engaged with the exhibitors, discussing the intricate craftsmanship, the contemporary evolution of South Asian fashion, and the immense

potential for Pakistani textile exports in the Qatar market.

Speaking at the event, Aamer expressed his appreciation for the efforts of Faisal and the Boutique H team.

He emphasised that the exhibition has become a vital bridge connecting the Pakistani textile and garment industry directly with consumers and retailers in Qatar.

He noted that the 8th edition represents a maturing of this platform, reflecting a growing demand for high-quality, culturally rich fashion in Doha.

Zafar highlighted the economic significance of the event, saying: "The textile and garment sector is a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, and Qatar represents a dynamic and discerning market."

"This exhibition is not just about fashion; it is about trade diplomacy," she continued. "It allows buyers and consumers in Qatar to experience the premium quality of Pakistani craftsmanship firsthand."

This exhibition arrives at a pivotal moment for Pakistan's textile and apparel sector, the backbone of the national economy, which accounts for approximately 60% of Pakistan's total exports, contributes 24.2% of industrial value addition, and employs around 40% of the industrial workforce.

Pakistan's textile exports reached \$17.93bn, with readymade garments alone accounting for \$4.29bn.

The current fiscal year has opened



strongly, with textile and clothing exports rising 5.55% and readymade garment exports surging 13.59%.

The timing of this exhibition is particularly opportune, given the strengthening economic partnership between the two nations.

Bilateral trade is continuing to increase, and both countries have committed to deepening co-operation through the Qatar-Pakistan Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment.

Pakistan's textile sector, ranked as the eighth-largest exporter in Asia, the third-largest yarn producer, and the fifth-largest cotton producer globally, is well-positioned to meet Qatar's growing demand for quality apparel and home textiles.

The exhibition boasts celebrated designers, including renowned names such as Sana Safinaz, Zunaira Teli, Komal Lakhani, Suffuse, and Hamna Amir.

The diverse array of exhibits ranges from traditional bridal wear and formal pret to contemporary fusion wear, highlighting the versatility of Pakistan's design landscape.

Rana reiterated the council's support



for such initiatives, saying: "Events like The Festive Exhibition are instrumental in realising the shared economic visions of Qatar and Pakistan."

"By facilitating these direct B2C and

B2B (business to consumer and business to business) interactions, we are not only boosting trade but also strengthening the cultural fabric that binds our nations together," he said.



Katara inspires young explorers during World Space Week 2026

Katara Cultural Village is hosting World Space Week 2026 at Al Thuraya Planetarium as part of its ongoing efforts to promote scientific and astronomical awareness and encourage children and young people to take an interest in space science through a range of activities that combine knowledge, hands-on learning, and entertainment.

Held in collaboration with World Space Week Qatar, Es'hailSat, and the Centre for Ambassadors of the Sustainable Development Goals, the events take place daily from 4pm to 7pm.

Al Thuraya Planetarium welcomes visitors to a comprehen-

sive scientific and educational experience featuring astronomy shows, science films, hands-on workshops, interactive activities, and exploration challenges, offering the public an opportunity to learn about the mysteries of space, planets, and the solar system through simple and engaging ways.

The programme introduces scientific concepts related to planets, rockets, and space exploration through an approach that combines information with hands-on learning.

Es'hailSat also presents the "Rocket Challenge" workshop, giving participants a hands-on experience that combines knowledge, challenge, and innovation

ahead of the conclusion of the four-day programme.

The week also features interactive exploration challenges designed to encourage visitor participation, along with a photo area, making the visit an engaging experience that combines learning with the enjoyment of the event's interactive atmosphere.

Yesterday's programme included a screening of *The Little Perfect Planet*, along with the interactive presentation *Journey to the Planets*, the "Design Your Planet" workshop, and the "Little Space Engineer" workshop.

The event concludes today with a range of activities and workshops, including the "From Manuscript to Space: We Have Mohammed" workshop and the "Launch Power: Principles of Propulsion and Force" workshop, presented by the Centre for Ambassadors of the Sustainable Development Goals. – **QNA**

QF's Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum showcased to world at Time100 Art event

Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum has been showcased to an international audience in New York at TIME's inaugural TIME100 Art event, celebrating influential figures across the global art ecosystem.

The event, at which the museum participated as a signature partner, brought together leading figures from across the global art world to celebrate the inaugural TIME100 Art list.

As an event partner, Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum was featured in the evening's programme through a video introducing the space, alongside an activation area where guests could explore the museum and its story through photo booths, a calligraphy activity, and interactive displays.

As a signature partner of the TIME100 Art event, QF introduced Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum – and the legacy of renowned Indian artist Maqbool Fida Husain, whose work and life story it displays – to a global audience, highlighting the museum's role in advancing cross-cultural dialogue



TIME chief executive Jess Sibley at the event.

and celebrating art from the region and beyond.

"During his long and diverse artistic career, Maqbool Fida Husain displayed his work in many of the world's greatest cities, including New York, where he first exhibited in 1964," said Jowaher al-Marri, operations director at Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum. "We are very proud to be bringing the legacy of this world-renowned artist back to the city at TIME100 Art."

"This event is also an amazing opportunity to bring Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum further to the attention of the international art world – introducing the museum, its collections, and the story behind it to people who may be encountering it for the first time, while also helping to amplify the continuing impact of Maqbool Fida Husain's pioneering work on the world," she said.

"As we approach the museum's first anniversary, this event has represented a point for reflection on how this cultural landmark has engaged over 12,000 people since its opening, the imaginations it has sparked, and the connections it has enabled," the official added.

Located in the QF's Education City, Lawh Wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum opened in November 2025.