

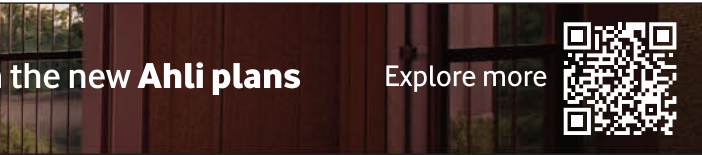


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Emergency rule over Pakistan province

Pakistan's president has declared a state of emergency and suspended a provincial government led by the party of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, which the federal government said had failed to tackle militancy in the province bordering Afghanistan. **Page 11**

‘We need to keep energy above politics’

HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, who is also president and chief executive of QatarEnergy, has called for a new world energy order that keeps energy above politics and never makes it a victim or target of conflict.

The minister made the call during the 17th International Energy Forum Ministerial Meeting in Riyadh, convened under the theme ‘Energy Security – A Shared Responsibility: Market Fundamentals, Supply Chain Resilience, and the New Dynamics of Demand and Supply’.

The meeting was opened in the Saudi capital by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman al-Saud, with the participation of energy ministers, invited government representatives, industry leaders, and international organisations.

HE al-Kaabi opened his remarks by expressing Qatar's “unwavering solidarity with Saudi Arabia, its leadership and people during these times”, in reference to the recent attacks.

“Furthermore,” he added, “I offer my sincere condolences to the families of those killed in these horrible attacks and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.”

The minister said the conflict in our region has caused what is, “by far, the world's worst energy crisis”



affecting the flow of around 20% of the world's hydrocarbon supplies.

He added that the conflict has targeted many energy assets across the region, causing tens of billions of dollars in damage and severe volatility in global markets.

“If there is one lesson we have learned from the past few months, it is that energy security, as critical as it is to the global economy, remains highly vulnerable and inseparable from geopolitical security,” HE al-Kaabi added.

He also highlighted the wider human consequences, noting that 1bn people still lack access to electricity and that approximately 4bn

people depend on food produced using manufactured fertilisers.

HE al-Kaabi stated that “the impact on all those lives should remind us of our shared responsibility to safeguard energy security, protect the free flow of energy, and keep energy above politics and conflicts”.

He called on the forum to explore every possible avenue to protect energy infrastructure during times of conflict, saying: “It is a real problem that energy infrastructure has become both an economic asset and a strategic military target. Energy security must unite us, not divide us. It must be protected, not weaponised.”



Ministry of Justice launches new Official Gazette website, Al Meezan Legal Portal



The Ministry of Justice launched yesterday a new website for the Official Gazette and the Al Meezan Legal Portal, advancing efforts to establish an integrated national digital platform for legal information in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and its digital agenda.

The launch was attended by HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi, pictured here launching the website and portal. HE al-Mohannadi said the project implements the directives of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani to make digital transformation a driver of greater government efficiency and improved public services. **(QNA)**

New digital platforms to bring legislation closer to the public

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Qatar is making legal information more accessible through two new digital platforms designed to deliver legislation faster, simplify access to legal resources and strengthen public participation in government.

HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi launched the Official Gazette website and the Al Meezan portal yesterday as part of efforts to advance Qatar's Third National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030.

Dr Abdullah al-Khaldi, director of the Official Gazette Department, said the new Official Gazette website would mark a



Dr Abdullah al-Khaldi

significant change in how legislation reaches the public, particularly by removing the need to wait for the publication of a new issue.

“Previously, we had to wait for an issue to be published before we could access the legislation,”

he said. “Now, however, the legislation and law will be published immediately upon receipt, without waiting for a new issue to be released.”

The shift toward faster publication is expected to make legal information more accessible and help users keep up with newly published legislation.

Dr al-Khaldi said the platform would also introduce mobile notifications to inform users when new content becomes available.

“This will change the process, particularly through notifications that will be sent to mobile phones informing users that a new article has just been published,” he said.

The feature is intended to make it easier for users to follow updates without repeatedly checking the website for new material. **To Page 2**

Riyadh airport hit by fresh Houthi strike

Reuters/AFP/QNA
Dubai/Riyadh

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis claimed responsibility for Saturday's strike on Riyadh's international airport that killed 13 people and wounded more than 300, as Saudi authorities reported people were injured in a new attack on the airport yesterday.

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said an “unidentified projectile” had targeted Riyadh's international airport Terminal 4 yesterday, causing a fire.

An unspecified number of people were injured, the Saudi civil aviation authority said, adding it was still assessing the damage.

The coalition also said Saudi air defences had intercepted a cruise missile in the vicinity of King Khalid International Airport.

The airport has been closed since Saturday's attack.

However, a long-planned international energy conference went ahead in Riyadh yesterday as planned.

AFP journalists and locals reported hearing the sound of multiple blasts in the Saudi capital yesterday.

“The birds went into a frenzy after the sound. The whole house shook,” said one resident of the Al-Aarid neighbourhood in the north of the city.

“Saudi air defences have been able to intercept some Houthi missile and drone attacks, but Saudi Arabia is so large that it's simply impossible for them to consistently defend themselves against Houthi attacks,” said Thomas Juneau, security analyst at Ottawa University.

In a televised speech yesterday, Houthi military spokesperson

Attack on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport draws widespread global condemnation

Reuters/AFP/QNA

Arab and international condemnations poured in following the attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh which left 13 civilians dead and hundreds more injured.

The United Arab Emirates lambasted the Houthi attacks on the airport.

In a statement, its ministry of foreign affairs said the attacks flagrantly violated Saudi Arabia's sovereignty, posing a threat to its security and stability.

It underlined the UAE's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and

its support for all measures taken to safeguard the Kingdom's security and stability. In Baghdad, the Iraqi government condemned the attack on the airport, which resulted in casualties and material damage, undermining regional security and stability.

In a statement, spokesman for the Iraqi Armed Forces Sabah al-Numan said the Iraqi government rejects any escalation of military and hostile actions, particularly those targeting civilians and civilian objects, as such actions deepen divisions and have inimical effects on regional peace. **To Page 2**

Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for Saturday's attack and also said the group had attacked the airport in Dammam in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province and two facilities of Saudi oil giant Saudi Aramco.

Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) reported that King Fahd International Airport in Dammam was targeted in an attack last evening.

In a statement, the GACA said damage assessments and safety inspections of the airport's facilities were underway in co-ordination with the relevant authorities.

Earlier, the Houthis renewed their warning to airlines, airport workers, and travellers against using Saudi airports.

“We urge everyone to take our warnings seriously, and Saudi Arabia bears responsibility for any failed interceptions,” the group said.

Saudi Arabia has stepped up its military involvement in Yemen in recent weeks, launching strikes against the Houthis and backing a Yemeni government counter-offensive after the group seized strategic territory along the Red Sea coast last month.

The Houthis said yesterday that Saudi Arabia carried out 124 air strikes in Yemen in the past 24 hours, including the capital Sanaa and the group's stronghold Saada.

Yemen's Houthi-run foreign ministry said that further Saudi military action in Yemen would trigger a stronger response, adding that its actions would be guided by the principle of reciprocity.

“Unless the Saudi enemy stops its aggression and interference in Yemen, worse is yet to come,” the ministry said in statements carried by Houthi-run Al Masirah television. **To Page 2**



Qatar participates in 28th meeting of GCC environment ministers



Qatar participated yesterday in the 28th meeting of the Committee of Ministers Responsible for Environmental Affairs in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, held in Bahrain. Qatar's delegation was headed by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie. The meeting discussed several agenda items aimed at strengthening joint GCC environmental action and promoting the exchange of expertise and experiences among GCC member states. - QNA

PM bids farewell to Libyan envoy

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with Libya's ambassador to Qatar Mohammed Mustafa al-Saghir al-Lafi, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. During the meeting, HE Sheikh Mohammed wished the envoy success in his future assignments and further progress and prosperity in relations between Qatar and Libya. - QNA

Minister farewells Ukrainian envoy

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Ukraine's ambassador to Qatar Andrii Kuzmenko, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE al-Muraikhi extended thanks to the envoy for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. - QNA

Qatar takes part in GCC meeting

Qatar participated in the 10th meeting of the Permanent Preparatory Committee at the Ministerial Level of the GCC Economic and Development Affairs Authority, convened in Manama. The delegation was headed by the deputy undersecretary for economic affairs at the Ministry of Finance, Dr Saud bin Abdullah al-Attiyah. - QNA

Qatar and Saudi Arabia sign MoU on energy co-operation

Qatar and Saudi Arabia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that lays the framework for joint co-operation between the two brotherly countries in the various aspects of the energy industry.

The agreement was signed by HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida al-Kaabi and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman al-Saud on the sidelines of the 17th International Energy Forum Ministerial Meeting and the 25th WPC Energy Congress, currently being held in the Saudi capital, which form part of the Riyadh Energy Week.

The MoU covers co-operation in sectors such as

oil and gas and their derivatives, refining, petrochemicals, electricity, clean hydrogen and its derivatives, renewable energy, and energy efficiency and storage.

In the fields of emission reduction and sustainability, the agreement addressed co-operation in climate change mitigation technologies, such as carbon capture, transport, reuse, and storage solutions.

It also covered enhancing joint international co-operation and co-ordination on matters related to energy, sustainability, and climate change in relevant international initiatives and frameworks.

The MoU will enter into force upon the conclusion of legal procedures in both Qatar and Saudi Arabia.



Al Adeid service allows anonymous reporting of security concerns: MoI

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The Al Adeid Service, offered by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), allows the public to communicate with the ministry and report security concerns anonymously, an officer from the ministry said during a webinar yesterday.

"The service acts as a communication link between the public and the ministry, enabling information to be passed to the relevant authorities while protecting the identity and privacy of the informant," said MoI official Lieutenant Khalifa Thallab Eid Julaimeld al-Hajiri. "It allows the public to easily pass and transfer all kinds of information related with security crime and society and also to send complaints, suggestions and security information to the concerned authorities."

He said Al Adeid is particularly useful for people who wish to report suspicious activities, security-related concerns, threats or other violations but are



Lieutenant Khalifa Thallab Eid Julaimeld al-Hajiri during the webinar.

reluctant to reveal their identities.

"The main objective of this service is to pass information to the concerned authorities without revealing the identity of the informer," he said.

The service receives information on a range of issues, including security concerns and other matters affecting public safety.

"If a report falls outside the responsibilities of the Preventive Security Department, it is referred to the appropriate department within the Ministry of Interior

for further action," Lt al-Hajiri noted.

He stressed that the service is available to everyone - Qatari citizens, expatriate residents and visitors - with the aim of addressing problems and ensuring that relevant information reaches the authorities concerned.

"Al Adeid service aims at finding out solutions to the problems suffered by people of Qatar whether they are citizens, residents or tourists where all information will be transferred to the concerned security authorities according to studied mechanism with unique information system in which the data is processed with top standard of professionalism," al-Hajiri said.

He said that reports are handled through established procedures and a specialised information system, with information processed professionally and kept strictly confidential.

"A key feature of Al Adeid service is its emphasis on the substance and credibility of the information rather than the identity or motives of the person providing it," the official said.

"The service focuses on examining the reported matter and verifying the accuracy of the information, without requiring the informant to appear in person," Lt al-Hajiri continued. "We will look and work on the verification of the veracity of the information, and it does not require the presence of the informer or caller."

If an issue falls outside the service's remit, officials may contact the informant, where appropriate, to direct them to the relevant department or authority for assistance.

The service can be accessed through several channels, including the Metrash platform, allowing members of the public to communicate their concerns conveniently.

Lt al-Hajiri said the public can also contact Al Adeid through its hotline, 92994, or by calling 2346111. An SMS channel is also available.

He encouraged members of the public to use the service to share relevant information that could help the authorities address security concerns and other issues, while benefiting from the confidentiality.

New digital platforms to bring laws closer to the public

From Page 1

Dr al-Khaldi also highlighted the introduction of modern technologies to the Official Gazette website, describing their use as a first for the platform.

He said the department had examined international examples and comparative studies to identify approaches that could improve the digital service.

"We benefited from the Official Gazette website, comparative studies, and the website of the Official Journal of the European Union," he said. "We drew on the technologies available there and then incorporated modern technologies in accordance with the highest standards and best practices in use."

The two platforms are intended to provide convenient access to legal knowledge for audiences both within Qatar and abroad.

They also support broader open government principles by making legislation and advisory materials easier to explore.

According to the launch announcement, the platforms will serve as gateways for the public to access legal information more easily, while encouraging community participation and transparency.

The initiative reflects Qatar's wider digital transformation ambitions under its national development strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030, with an emphasis on making government information more accessible through digital services.

By prioritising timely publication and easier access, the new platforms aim to narrow the gap between the availability of legislation and the public's ability to find and consult it.

MCIT honours entities for digital transformation adoption

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), in co-operation with Microsoft Office, showcased the second cohort of the Microsoft 365 Copilot Adoption Programme, in a meeting for leaders and representatives of 17 government and semi-government entities, which addressed usage and adoption indicators, progress achieved in training, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) agent use cases, as well as experiences from participating entities and priorities for the next phase.

The assistant undersecretary for infrastructure and operations affairs at the MCIT, Sami Mohammed al-Shammari, said that results from the second cohort reflect clear progress in the adoption of Microsoft 365 Copilot across participating entities and underscore the importance of our partnership with Microsoft in supporting entities and enabling employees to benefit from AI

technologies in their daily work.

"We view what has been achieved so far as an important foundation for the next phase, where our focus will be on expanding usage, developing higher-value use cases, and strengthening the institutional impact of the technology in a way that supports the efficiency of government work," he added.

Indicators presented during the meeting showed that the number of active users exceeded 8,000, with an adoption rate of 69.6% among 12,260 licensed users, alongside approximately 2.1mn actions and tasks recorded using the tool.

These indicators reflect the growing scale of its use across participating entities and provide a basis for monitoring the development of adoption rates and identifying opportunities to expand its use across institutional tasks and processes.

The meeting reviewed the programme's skills development efforts, with 508 training sessions



delivered to more than 9,000 employees.

These included foundational training, executive leadership sessions, use case discovery workshops, specialised training, and skills development for teams supporting the adoption of the tool within participating entities.

These efforts also covered multiple functional areas, helping align training with actual busi-

ness needs and strengthening employees' ability to use the tool effectively in their daily work.

The meeting also addressed the role of communications campaigns, activation activities, and learning resources in supporting employees and encouraging sustained usage, alongside monitoring progress through dashboards and periodic reviews.

Discussions covered the latest



developments across 96 AI agent use cases under the programme, as well as selected practical demonstrations exploring opportunities to improve processes and make greater use of institutional knowledge, supporting the transition from individual use of technologies toward applications that are more closely aligned with the priorities and needs of participating entities. - QNA

Riyadh airport hit by fresh Houthi strike

From Page 1

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the United States was considering joining Saudi strikes on the Houthis in the conflict, a spillover from the wider war on Iran that the US and Israel launched in February.

The five-day conference of international energy organisations, WPC Energy, opened as planned yesterday at a convention centre some 10km from the airport.

Meanwhile, a ministerial meeting of the International Energy Forum also went ahead yesterday, with its plenary session to be held behind closed doors, according to a media advisory.

Italy's energy minister, Gilberto Pichetto Fratin, whose country was co-hosting the event, had said on Friday that he would participate

remotely via video link.

Separately, Saudi authorities notified parents that in-person classes at all schools in Riyadh would be suspended and shifted to remote learning until Thursday for all students, teachers and administrative staff.

In Saturday's attack, the third on Riyadh's airport in a week, the dead included four Saudis, two Bangladeshis and nationals of the US, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Sudan and Egypt, Saudi authorities said.

India's embassy in Riyadh said yesterday that one of its citizens injured in the attack had died, adding to the initial death toll of 12.

A Riyadh-based Western diplomat told AFP that the official number of injured may not give a full picture, as it did not appear to include those with minor wounds.

Four people were killed in the

two previous attacks on the airport earlier in the week.

One of the attacks also caused heavy damage to a Saudi commercial plane parked on the tarmac.

Witnesses to Saturday's strike described chaos in the aftermath.

"People who were in Terminal 3 started running towards us," a 32-year-old Riyadh resident told AFP. "Some had lost a hand or an arm. People were running while carrying injured people, covered in blood."

The attack prompted health officials to activate a mass call-up of doctors, a medical source said.

The US, Canadian, German and Spanish embassies in Saudi Arabia have warned their citizens to avoid Riyadh airport, while Australia urged its citizens yesterday to stay indoors altogether and "shelter in place".

Attack on Riyadh airport draws condemnation

From Page 1

In Damascus, the Syrian Arab Republic condemned the attack, stating that it constituted a breach of Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and a direct threat to its security, stability, civilian safety, civilian assets, and air navigation.

In Beirut, Lebanon's ministry of foreign affairs and emigrants strongly lambasted the attack.

The ministry said that attacks on critical infrastructure and civilians amount to a brazen violation of the principles of international law and the rules of international humanitarian law.

The Palestinian presidency also condemned the attack.

On the European front, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described the Houthi attack as a grave escalation, calling on the Houthis to halt their strikes on civilian targets.

In London, Secretary of State for Defence Wes Streeting condemned the deadly Houthi attack, describing it as a "dangerous escalation" and a "despicable act".

In Berlin, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul strongly condemned the attack on Riyadh airport in a post on X.

Yesterday, France condemned the "heinous attack" by the Houthis and stressed "total solidarity" with Saudi Arabia.

France, which is already lending troops and military equipment to Saudi Arabia, "will continue to remain by its side in its defence of its territory and its infrastructure", a foreign ministry statement said, calling on the Houthis to cease their attacks.

The Russian foreign ministry said yesterday that it condemned the attack on Riyadh airport, Russian news agency Interfax reported.

The situation in the Middle East can only be resolved through diplomatic means, the foreign ministry said.

Turkiye also condemned the Houthi attack on Riyadh's international airport, slamming the "deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure and innocent civilians".

Pakistan is meanwhile in contact with Saudi Arabia's authorities, the country's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said in an X post yesterday.

The foreign minister stated that Pakistan condemned the attack, adding that "attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure are totally unacceptable".

Official highlights institutional vision to improve the work of Shura Council

HE Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud announced that the Council's General Secretariat completed preparations for the opening of the second ordinary session of the Council's second legislative term, marking its 55th annual session.

He noted that the preparations reflect a forward-looking institutional vision and draw on qualified national personnel to ensure the continuity of the Council's work and improve institutional performance.

Speaking at a meeting with local media representatives yesterday, al-Mahmoud explained that the opening session would be followed by the first working session, during which the procedures stipulated in the Shura Council's internal regulations would be carried out.

He highlighted the General Secretariat's efforts to test technical and logistical systems and verify the readiness of all facilities to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of proceedings. Coordination has also been carried out with the relevant entities to ensure the readiness of buildings, facilities, systems, technologies and personnel.

Al-Mahmoud stressed that the secretariat's preparations extend beyond the opening session to cover the entire session and legislative term. These include preparations for weekly sessions and committee meetings, receiving parliamentary delegations, arranging bilateral meetings, and supporting the Council's activities and engagements in Qatar and abroad.

He added that qualified national personnel support the Council and its various bodies in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with approved regulations and rules, as well as directives issued by the Council's leadership.

He emphasised that the General Secretariat's role extends beyond routine administrative work, combining institutional responsibilities with specialised legal functions that reflect the Shura Council's status as the country's legislative authority, alongside the political and diplomatic expertise required for parliamentary work.

Al-Mahmoud underscored the need to carry out these responsibilities within a clear institutional framework and in accordance with the Council's internal regulations

to ensure coordination among administrative, legal and parliamentary functions and improve efficiency and quality.

In this context, he revealed that the General Secretariat had developed its 2025-2030 strategy, launched during the previous legislative session, to set institutional priorities and establish a roadmap for future operations.

The strategy has six objectives: strengthening institutional governance; improving operational efficiency through digital transformation and innovation; supporting legislative and oversight functions; expanding local and international partnerships and co-operation; developing a workforce equipped for future needs; and enhancing community engagement. It also includes 46 projects to be implemented over five years.

Reviewing the strategy's first year of implementation, al-Mahmoud pointed out that it helped strengthen governance across the Secretariat by activating the organisational structure, clarifying departmental responsibilities, documenting work procedures and improving operational mechanisms.

He further noted that the strategy improved operational efficiency through digitalisation and innovation, including the automation of Council processes and the development of its technical and technological infrastructure.

In this regard, he noted that most of the Council's operations are now carried out electronically. He highlighted several digital systems developed and implemented by the Council, including the "Injaz" system for managing projects and strategies and monitoring their implementation across various departments, and the "Integrated System," which helps employees and departments fulfil their job responsibilities and access all required services, particularly those related to human resources and financial affairs. The latter also serves as a source of data and information.

Al-Mahmoud also highlighted the digital transformation of the Sessions and Committees Department, a key division of the General Secretariat. Digitising workflows for session agendas, minutes and committee meetings has converted more than a quarter of a million sheets of paper into digital documents.

The shift has reduced printing, cut paper consumption, generated financial savings and supported environmental conservation, he pointed out.

He stated that these achievements advance the General Secretariat's strategic objectives and support Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly in improving institutional efficiency and sustainability and adopting modern digital solutions.

HE Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud highlighted the General Secretariat's efforts to support the Council's legislative and oversight functions. These include developing a guide to legal competencies and strengthening co-ordination with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, reflecting ongoing cooperation between the Shura Council and the government and complementing the work of the two branches within their respective mandates.

On partnerships and institutional cooperation, al-Mahmoud noted that the General Secretariat is working to strengthen collaboration at the local and international levels through agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) covering training, professional development, and the exchange of expertise and knowledge.

These include an MoU with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, represented by the Institute of Public Administration, on training, research, studies and legal awareness, as well as an MoU with the Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on research and the delivery of programs and workshops related to diplomatic training.

Other agreements include MoUs with Qatar News Agency (QNA) on co-operation; with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), represented by Qatar Digital Academy, on training; and with the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) on joint training initiatives. An MoU was also signed with the State Audit Bureau to cooperate in training and professional development.

As part of its international co-operation and efforts to exchange expertise, the General Secretariat has organised visits for its staff to legislative bodies in brotherly and



HE Secretary-General of the Shura Council Nayef bin Mohammed al-Mahmoud.

friendly countries to learn from their experiences and best practices, Al Mahmoud added.

The Secretariat has also received delegations from counterpart councils to share the Shura Council's experience, strengthen ties between administrative and legal staff, and exchange expertise and knowledge related to parliamentary work.

Hel stressed that these initiatives are guided by a clear vision and a structured training plan aimed at developing skilled and qualified personnel to support legislative work and preparing national talent for leadership roles within the General Secretariat. These efforts contribute to achieving institutional objectives and ensuring continuity in performance.

He also highlighted the Secretariat's commitment to developing a second tier of leaders by equipping national talent with the skills and knowledge needed to take on future leadership responsibilities, ensuring institutional continuity and empowering Qatari professionals.

On community engagement, al-Mahmoud explained that the General Secretariat seeks to expand its outreach to different segments of society by inviting representatives of social centres, universities, academic programs, and official institutions, as well as writers and legal professionals, to attend Council sessions. This reflects the Council's commitment to strengthening public engagement and raising awareness of its work and mandate.

He also announced the forthcoming launch of Al Shura magazine, a quarterly publication covering the Council's work and activities. The magazine will provide another channel for engaging with the public and a platform for publishing studies, legal opinions and material related to parliamentary and legislative affairs.

Al-Mahmoud further highlighted the upcoming launch of the Council's revamped website, which will feature interactive tools and direct communication channels with the public. These include a legislative process tracking service enabling citizens to follow legislation, laws, and legislative proposals through their various stages, as well as an interactive platform for gauging public opinion on issues of importance to society.

He underscored the General Secretariat's commitment to strengthening communication with traditional and digital media, recognising the media's role in keeping the public informed about the Council's proceedings, including those held at Tamim Bin Hamad Hall.

He commended local media for its professional and objective coverage of the Council's events, activities and meetings, both in Qatar and abroad.

Concluding his remarks, al-Mahmoud affirmed that the General Secretariat continues to develop its tools and operational mechanisms through an integrated institutional approach that keeps pace with developments in legislative and parliamentary work while promoting efficiency, governance and innovation. (QNA)

Awqaf concludes first phase of sign language training for customer service staff

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs' Human Resources Department has concluded the first phase of a sign language training programme designed for customer service and frontline staff. The programme aims to enable effective communication with the deaf, the hard of hearing, and individuals with speech difficulties, thereby enhancing the quality of services provided to this demographic.

The comprehensive training programme targets 26 administrative staff members from the Ministry and is conducted in two phases; the first took place from Oct 4-8, while the second is scheduled for Oct 18-22.

A period of practical field application is included between the two phases, allowing participants to directly apply the skills they have acquired within the workplace.

The program's implementation aligns with the ministry's strategic objectives to develop human capital and embed values of inclusivity and social integration. It also supports the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which seeks to build a cohesive society that empowers persons with disabilities and facilitates their access to government services.

In this context, Director of the Human Resources Department at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Mohammed Hassan al-Malki noted that investing in employee skill development is a cornerstone of achieving institutional excellence.

He highlighted that the program focuses on practical application and direct communication, while also providing digital reference materials to ensure the sustainability of the knowledge gained. The training is supervised by expert Mohammed Ali al-Banali, accredited by the Arab Union for Organisations Working in the Care of the Deaf, with the participation of personnel from key ministry departments, including Financial and Administrative Affairs, Islamic Affairs, Human Resources, Zakat Affairs, Mosques, and the General Directorate of Endowments (Awqaf). (QNA)



Two new programmes at CCQ in Spring 2027

Community College of Qatar (CCQ) has announced the launch of two new programmes in Spring 2027: the Associate of Artificial Intelligence and the Associate of Digital Media. This initiative aligns with the college's efforts to keep pace with digital transformation requirements and labour market needs. CCQ plans to admit 108 students in the first cohort, with 48 in Artificial Intelligence and 60 in Digital Media. Classes begin on Jan 10, 2027.

In a statement issued yesterday, CCQ announced that the Admission and Registration Department will open transfers into the new programmes for current CCQ students in other majors starting Oct 18, 2026, while registration for new applicants opens on Nov 1, 2026, in line with CCQ's approved admission requirements and procedures.

The Associate of Artificial Intelligence, offered by the Information Technology Department in CCQ's Science and Technology Division, is the first associate degree in this field in Qatar. The two-year, 60-credit-hour program combines academic study with hands-on practice in areas including machine learning, data analysis, data structures, computer vision, and AI ethics, where students train in labs with advanced GPU-based computing equipment, supported by recommendations from global and local technology companies, including Google Cloud, Huawei, Microsoft, and Cisco, offering the possibility of transferring up to 54 credit hours to pursue a bachelor's degree at Qatar University (QU), in line with approved academic pathways and requirements.

In this regard, Dean of the Science and Technology Division, Dr Abdullah al-Ghushami said: "This programme responds to the need for professionals with practical skills in artificial intelligence and related technologies," adding that CCQ surveys showed strong interest in the field. In the surveys, 68% of students said they wanted to enrol in the programme. In addition, 95% of employers and officials surveyed said their organisations have specialised units or departments that need graduates of this program, such as the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the National Cyber Security Agency, and QatarEnergy.

CCQ is also launching the Associate of Digital Media, a two-year program offered by the Literature Department in the Liberal Arts Division, which runs under the slogan "Today's Field, Tomorrow's Opportunities in Qatar". The curriculum covers digital writing, podcast production, web documentaries, data journalism, multimedia production.

Dean of the Liberal Arts Division Dr Al-Jazi al-Athba affirmed that the program integrates modern technologies while underscoring professional responsibility and national identity, thereby preparing graduates for careers in media organisations, government sectors, and telecommunications and marketing companies.

The launch of these two programmes aligns with the inclusion of these disciplines among the priority areas in the scholarship plan and the government's guide to targeted specialisations, against the backdrop of projections that Qatar's artificial intelligence market will grow to \$1.94bn by 2030. (QNA)

Doha hosts workshop on shaping digital future to strengthen Qatar-EU partnership

Doha yesterday hosted a specialised workshop on shaping the digital future, exploring the European Union (EU)'s approach to platform and artificial intelligence governance, as well as lessons learned from the EU.

Co-organised by the Public Prosecution and the Delegation of the EU to the State of Qatar, the workshop is structured around three main areas of growing strategic importance. The first focuses on digital platform governance, examining the allocation of responsibilities among public authorities, platforms, regulatory bodies, trusted flaggers, researchers, and civil society.

It places particular emphasis on the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) as a leading regulatory framework and explores ways to combat ille-



gal content and disinformation.

The second area focuses on the use of artificial intelligence in criminal justice, examining current and emerging applications of AI in criminal justice systems, including predictive policing, risk assessment, facial recognition, forensic analysis, and judicial decision-support systems.

It also highlights concerns about bias, transparency, due process safeguards, and human oversight, as well as the latest regulatory developments related to trustworthy artificial intelligence.

The third area addresses the protection of critical infrastructure and cyber diplomacy. Sessions examine the importance of cyber diplomacy in strengthening international stability and delve into ways to protect critical infrastructure from serious cyber



incidents, including ransomware attacks and hybrid threats that combine cyber operations with information manipulation.

Participants are also set to discuss ways to strengthen preparedness, response capabilities, and diplomatic coordination to counter these threats.

The workshop underscores the pivotal role of international dialogue and the exchange of expertise in developing sustainable digital policies that balance technological innovation with the protection of public security and fundamental rights.

It also reflects the Qatar-EU commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by the digital age. (QNA)

HMC opens new hospital to support cancer patients

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) launched a new specialised clinic at Hamad General Hospital (HGH) to support cancer patients who require repeated intravenous treatments. The clinic provides specialised assessment to determine the most appropriate method of care tailored to each patient's condition and treatment plan.

The clinic brings together oncology and vascular surgery teams from the National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) and the Vascular Surgery Department at HGH, which provides a full picture of each patient's needs related to intravenous treatment, and helps with planning and follow-up at every stage of treatment.

Many cancer patients require medications and treatments to be administered intravenously repeatedly during their treatment. Some patients may experience difficulty establishing and maintaining suitable venous access for treatment, particularly when treatment sessions are frequent and follow-up extends over a long period.

In this regard, Medical Director and CEO of NCCCR and Chairman of Cancer Services at HMC, Dr Mohammed Salem al-Hassan, said: "We are committed to con-



tinuously developing cancer care services to meet patients' diverse needs throughout their treatment journey. The launch of this clinic is part of these efforts, providing specialised care to address a critical challenge many patients experience during treatment.

"Caring for cancer patients requires ongoing integration among different medical specialties and areas of expertise. We place great importance on this integration to ensure continuity and coordination of the services provided to patients and to address their needs," he added.

In turn, Head of Oncology, Palliative Care and Urgent Care Services at NCCCR, Dr Al-Harith al-Khater, said: "Some cancer patients require intravenous treatments over extended periods, and their needs may change as treat-



ment continues. The clinic enables medical teams to assess these needs at an early stage and address them as part of the patient's treatment plan, helping to facilitate the treatment journey and manage challenges that may arise."

For his part, Head of Trauma, Vascular, and General Surgery Department at HGH, Dr Hassan Ali Saud al-Thani, said: "Some patients may experience difficulty maintaining suitable venous access for treatment, particularly when intravenous treatments are administered repeatedly. Specialised assessment helps determine the appropriate options for each case based on the patient's needs and the nature of their treatment.

"This pathway enables cases requiring specialised assessment to be addressed in a timely manner and supports decision-making



regarding venous access options according to each patient's needs," Dr Hassan al-Thani added.

In the same context, a patient describing their experience with the clinic, said, "I used to feel anxious before my chemotherapy sessions because of the difficulty accessing my vein. Sometimes this meant having to make repeated attempts to insert the needle, which caused me pain and discomfort. After I was referred to the clinic, the team, along with the Vascular Surgery team, listened to my concerns and explained the option that was appropriate for my condition. They answered my questions clearly, which made me feel more reassured. After the appropriate catheter was inserted for my treatment, receiving my medications became easier and more comfortable." (QNA)



MoPH conducts course on Public Health Emergency Management

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) conducted a pilot foundation course under the National Training Plan on Public Health Emergency Management, bringing together 72 participants from a range of sectors involved in public health emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

The course aimed to strengthen national capacities and preparedness by promoting a shared understanding of the core principles of public health emergency management. Key areas covered included preparedness and response, emergency operations management,

multisectoral co-ordination, risk assessment, national and international frameworks, and risk communication and community engagement.

Director of the Health Emergency Department at MoPH, Dr Soha al-Bayat, said the course was organised in response to the findings of the 2024 multisectoral training needs assessment and the 2025 National Health Emergency Management Training Plan Development Workshop.

Both highlighted the need for a unified national training program on public health emergency management, stressing the importance

of building national capacity and strengthening coordination among relevant stakeholders.

She commended the high level of engagement and active participation demonstrated throughout the course, noting that the outcomes of the pilot phase and the lessons learned would help further refine and formally endorse the training curriculum ahead of the program's wider rollout at the national level.

The course supports national efforts to build a sustainable public health emergency preparedness and response system in line with international standards and best practices. (QNA)

UDST marks World Mental Health Day

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) marked World Mental Health Day with a campus-wide programme that encouraged students to express themselves, connect with others, and explore practical ways to support their mental health and well-being. Organised by the Student Counselling and Accessibility Services Department, the event featured a range of creative, interactive activities designed to promote inclusivity among students and raise mental health awareness.

A key highlight was the Art and Photography Exhibition, featuring entries from the "Your Voice, Your Story, Your Well-being" competition. The exhibition provided students with an opportunity to express their understanding of mental health and the challenges they face through creative art.

The following entries took first and second place in recognition of their creative contributions: The Trap I Wove by Donna Grace Ziganay, taking first place, and The Pulse Behind Silence by Dalal Humran, taking second place.

Students also took part in a variety of activities, including meaningful discussions, introductions to available support services and resources, and several competitions.

Commenting on the initiative, Fahad al-Hajri, vice president, Student Affairs, UDST, said: "Mental health is an integral part of health and well-being in its broader sense. At the University of Doha for Science and Technology, we believe that mental health is an essential part of the university student experience and a key contributor to students' development and success. Educational institutions have a responsibility to promote this approach, foster an environment that supports students' mental well-being, and provide appropriate services to help them overcome the challenges they may face. We are pleased to organise this event, along with other activities throughout the academic year, to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and highlight the resources and services offered by the University to support our students in this area."

World Mental Health Day is part of UDST's 2025-2027 Wellness Strategy, promoting awareness and encouraging healthy practices across mental, physical and social wellbeing.

The Student Counselling and Accessibility Services Department provides counselling, support, and resources to help students navigate academic and personal challenges. The University also offers a range of sport and recreational facilities, including fitness centres, swimming pools, and sports courts, giving the community opportunities to participate in physical and recreational activities and maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle.



QIB announces two new Misk Account millionaires



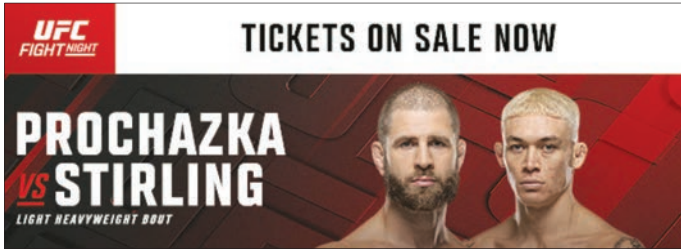
Relatives of Amal Hassan al-Khulaifi and Ibrahim Khalid al-Mohannadi, who won QR1mn each, receiving the ceremonial cheque.

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has announced two new millionaires of the '9th Misk Account' edition, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to rewarding responsible saving and empowering customers across Qatar. Amal Hassan al-Khulaifi and Ibrahim Khalid al-Mohannadi won QR1mn each, following the grand prize draw held under the supervision of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and QIB.

The October draw marks the fifth millionaire announcement for 2026, with two more QR1mn winners still to be named throughout the year. On this ninth edition, the Misk Account offers the largest prize pool in the country, totalling QR26mn, with opportunities for 1,124 QIB customers to win. Most notably, the number of QR1mn grand prize winners has doubled this year to 12, with the millionaire draw now taking place every two months to announce two winners simultaneously. In addition to the grand prizes, six customers will win QR50,000 each every month, while 20 customers will win QR10,000 each week. To qualify for the QR1mn grand prize draw, customers are required to open a Misk Account at least three months before the upcoming grand draw month and maintain a minimum monthly balance of QR10,000. For every additional QR10,000 customers earn an extra chance to win.

The prizes were received on

behalf of the winners by their family members, with the son of Amal Hassan al-Khulaifi receiving the prize on her behalf, and a relative of Ibrahim Khalid al-Mohannadi receiving the prize on his behalf. Commenting on the occasion, they said: "The win came as an unexpected surprise to our families. We encourage customers to open a Misk Account and start saving for the opportunity to become one of the next Misk millionaires." Congratulating the winners, D Anand, QIB general manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "We are pleased to congratulate our two new millionaires of the ninth Misk Account edition. The continued excitement around the Misk Account reflects its success in encouraging customers to make saving a sustainable habit while giving them rewarding opportunities throughout the year. "With twice the number of millionaires in this edition and the largest prize pool in Qatar, we remain committed to creating greater value for our customers and supporting their financial aspirations." Existing and new QIB customers can open a Misk Account easily through the QIB Mobile App. Upon opening the account, customers receive a free debit card, become eligible to request a free credit card (free for the first year) against their Misk Account balance, earn profits on their savings, and enjoy frequent opportunities to win cash prizes.



Visit Qatar launches UFC Fight Night ticket sales

Visit Qatar, in partnership with UFC, the world's premier mixed martial arts organisation, has announced that tickets for UFC Fight Night: Procházka vs Stirling are now available through the official Visit Qatar ticketing platform, ahead of the event taking place in Doha on November 21 at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena.

UFC Fight Night returns to Doha featuring a line-up of leading mixed martial arts athletes, following the success of last year's event. The headline bout will see former UFC light heavyweight champion and No 2-ranked contender Jiri Procházka face undefeated No 5-ranked Navajo Stirling in a five-round main event. The co-main event will feature former UFC bantamweight champion and No 4-ranked featherweight Aljamain

Sterling against No 9-ranked Kevin Vallejos.

The Visit Qatar ticketing platform was announced at the launch of Qatar Calendar 2026/2027, bringing event discovery and ticket purchasing together through a unified digital destination. UFC Fight Night is one of many sporting, cultural and entertainment events featured on Qatar Calendar, which showcases the diverse range of events and experiences taking place across Qatar throughout the year.

Tickets for UFC Fight Night: Procházka vs Stirling are available through the Visit Qatar ticketing platform here: <https://visitqatar.com/ufc-tickets> The full programme of upcoming events is also available on the official Qatar Calendar website here: <https://visitqatar.com/intl-en/events-calendar>

HEC Paris, Doha expands faculty expertise

HEC Paris, Doha is further strengthening its faculty and expanding its academic footprint in Qatar with the appointment of Professor Mohammadamin Yousefi as Assistant Professor of Organisation Theory. Professor Yousefi joins HEC Paris, Doha from the Netherlands, bringing expertise in strategy, entrepreneurship, and organisation theory, along with extensive international academic experience. His academic engagements include a visiting scholar position at Cambridge Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, and guest lecturing at Amsterdam Business School. He holds a PhD in Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, and an MSc in Social



Innovation and Entrepreneurship from the London School of Economics and Political Science. "Professor Yousefi brings valuable expertise in organisation theory, strategy and entrepreneurship to HEC Paris, Doha," said Joshua Kobb, Chief Growth and Impact Officer. "His research and teaching experience will enrich our academic community in Doha and contribute to regional teaching and research, while offering valuable perspectives on the organisational and strategic dynamics shaping businesses and institutions across the GCC."

Liquidation Announcement (First)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Alarabia Heavy Equipment Co. W.L.L.
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announces the commencement of
the liquidation of

Alarabia Heavy Equipment Co. W.L.L.
Commercial Registration No. (27395)

Any party that has any claims with this
Company should send a registered letter,
including all supporting documents to
P.O. Box: : **431**, Doha – Qatar
within 45 days from the date of this publication.

Qatar Charity and Wolf Store Sign Cooperation Agreement



Qatar Charity and Wolf Store, an electronics and mobile accessories retailer based in Gharafa Market, have signed a cooperation agreement under the corporate social responsibility program.

The agreement aims to support humanitarian and charitable projects, strengthen private-sector engagement in community service, and promote the values of giving and solidarity.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Abdulaziz Jassim Hejji, Executive Director of Communications and Community Impact at Qatar Charity, and Mr. Saleh Mohammed Ziada, Chief Executive Officer of Wolf Store.

Supporting Charitable Work

Under the agreement, Wolf Store will allocate a fixed amount from every sale to support Qatar Charity's projects. Customers will also be able to contribute through a donation option on the company's website and electronic donation devices installed at its branches.

These channels are expected to make charitable giving more accessible to customers and encourage wider community participation.

A Partnership Serving the Community

Commenting on the agreement, Mr. Abdulaziz Jassim Hejji said it reflected the importance of cooperation between charitable organizations and the private sector in supporting humanitarian work and fostering a culture of giving.

"We value Wolf Store's initiative and its commitment to supporting charitable projects through innovative mechanisms that encourage customers to give, helping these initiatives reach more beneficiaries," Hejji said.

"This agreement offers a practical model of constructive cooperation between private-sector companies and charitable organizations. It also highlights the importance of combining efforts to serve communities and deliver sustainable benefits to those in need," he added.

Hejji noted that Qatar Charity continues to build strategic partnerships with private-sector institutions in recognition of their vital role in supporting humanitarian and development projects. He also called on companies and businesses to expand their social contributions and participate in initiatives that promote solidarity and assist vulnerable communities.

Humanitarian Initiatives

For his part, Mr. Saleh Mohammed Ziada expressed pride in the partnership and reaffirmed Wolf Store's commitment to humanitarian and community initiatives.

"We are proud to cooperate with Qatar Charity, one of the leading organizations in humanitarian and charitable work. We believe the private sector has an important role to play in supporting humanitarian and development efforts," Ziada said.

"Through this partnership, we aim to encourage our customers to participate in charitable giving and contribute to creating a positive impact in the community," he added.

Ziada said the agreement marked the first institutional partnership between Wolf Store and Qatar Charity, expressing hope that cooperation would expand through further joint humanitarian and community initiatives.

The agreement forms part of Qatar Charity's efforts to develop partnerships with private-sector institutions and mobilize their contributions to humanitarian and development projects worldwide.

Qatar Charity Signs 'CP' Agreement with New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant



Qatar Charity (QC) has signed a cooperation agreement with New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant under its 'Charity Partner' (CP) program. The agreement aims to promote corporate social responsibility and support the organization's humanitarian projects and initiatives.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Abdulaziz Jassim Hejji, Executive Director of Communications and Community Impact at Qatar Charity, and Eng. Jamal Khalid Alsayyadi, CEO of The Prestiges Group, which owns New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant.

Under the agreement, New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant has joined the "CP" program as a Silver Partner, reflecting both parties' commitment to supporting humanitarian action and promoting the values of solidarity and giving.

Areas of Cooperation

Under the agreement, New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant will make a financial contribution to Qatar Charity. Subject to the organization's prior approval, the restaurant may also use the program's 'CP' trademark in its advertisements and on its products. It will also promote the program through its available marketing channels.

In return, Qatar Charity will provide the restaurant with the media and promotional benefits offered under the program, helping to highlight its community contributions and support for humanitarian action.

Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility

Commenting on the agreement, Hejji said it underscored the importance of cooperation between charitable organizations and the private sector in supporting humanitarian action and strengthening its impact on communities.

"We are pleased to welcome New Zad Al Yemen Restaurant to the 'CP' program and appreciate its commitment to supporting initiatives that serve communities and assist people in need," Hejji said.

"Qatar Charity continues to build strategic partnerships with private-sector organizations, recognizing their vital role in supporting humanitarian and development projects and achieving a positive and lasting impact."

Hejji called on companies and institutions to increase their participation in corporate social responsibility programs, join the "CP" program, and obtain the right to use its "CP" trademark. He noted that such participation would help foster a culture of giving and extend the reach of charitable projects.

For his part, Eng. Jamal Khalid Alsayyadi, CEO of The Prestiges Group, said: "We are pleased to join the "CP" program of Qatar Charity. We believe corporate social responsibility is a fundamental commitment by the private sector to the community, rather than a one-off initiative."

"We are proud to translate this commitment into practical support for humanitarian action and development initiatives in Qatar, which has established a distinguished model for promoting solidarity, giving, and cooperation between the private and charitable sectors."

"We regard this partnership as the beginning of productive and sustainable cooperation. We look forward to expanding our collaboration with Qatar Charity and supporting humanitarian and community initiatives, strengthening the impact of corporate social responsibility and reflecting our commitment to making a positive contribution to the community."

About "CP"

Qatar Charity launched the "CP" program in 2021 to develop its community partnership framework and encourage companies and institutions to support humanitarian and development activities and community service.

The program grants its "CP" trademark to partners across different categories and levels, reflecting their commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Qatar Charity implements 145 economic empowerment projects in Burkina Faso

With the support of generous donors, Qatar Charity (QC)

has implemented around 145 economic empowerment projects in Burkina Faso, providing sewing machines and supplies to women and girls from vulnerable communities and internally displaced families. Benefiting 1,015 people, the initiative forms part of QC's efforts to strengthen livelihoods and promote economic self-reliance among those most in need. In a statement, QC



explained that the initiative is designed to help beneficiaries launch income-generating activities

and also expand their existing businesses, improving their living conditions and advancing their economic

and social inclusion. The support is especially significant amid the difficult circumstances facing

many families and internally displaced people. The project was implemented in coordination with Burkina Faso's Ministry of Family and Solidarity, which oversaw the distribution of sewing machines. The ministry commended its partnership with Qatar Charity, describing QC as a trusted partner whose work supports government priorities in social protection and economic empowerment.

It also highlighted QC's contribution to expanding access to vocational opportunities and improving livelihoods for vulnerable groups, particularly women, orphans and internally displaced people. Beneficiaries said Qatar Charity's support had transformed their lives by providing them with a sustainable source of income, greater financial stability and a stronger ability to meet their daily needs.

Seminar Season concludes with session on Hadith

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Culture has concluded the fifth edition of its Seminar Season with a session examining the historical preservation and authentication of the Prophetic Hadith, highlighting the importance of rigorous scholarship, digital technology and renewed approaches to Islamic heritage.

Held at Lusail University and presented by renowned Hadith scholar Dr Bashar Awad, the session was attended by HE Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, Minister of Culture, alongside academics, researchers and intellectuals.

Dr Awad traced the development of Hadith documentation, noting that recording began during the Prophet's lifetime, with written documentation expanding in the first century AH and more systematic compilation, classification and indexing emerging in the second century. He emphasised that authenticating Hadith requires careful examination of the chains of transmission (isnad), the text (matn), the reliability and precision of narrators, and the various routes through which a narration has been transmitted. He cautioned against assuming that a Hadith is weak simply because it does not appear in the collections of Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim. Assessing authenticity, he explained, requires a comprehensive understanding of Hadith scholars' methodologies and the practical application of



HE Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, Minister of Culture, with dignitaries.



The moderator (L) with Dr Bashar Awad.

established principles.

Comparing different transmission routes can reveal hidden defects or strengthen a narration when multiple chains support it, provided the relevant scholarly criteria are met.

He also highlighted the importance of understanding the methodological context behind scholars' assessments of individual narrators.

The discussion examined Sheikh Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani's contributions to Hadith studies, with Dr Awad acknowledging his efforts to research and classify Prophetic traditions.

Highlighting the role of modern technology, Dr Awad said digitisation and the free availability of books online have expanded access to scholarly resources and facilitated the study and

verification of Hadith.

He noted that reliable digital libraries and applications can help researchers consult sources and assess narrations more efficiently, while technological advances offer new opportunities to preserve and disseminate Islamic heritage.

Dr Awad also said he is working on a 45-volume encyclopaedia on Dirayah, the critical analysis of Hadith, and developing a digital platform called Tahqiq (Verification).

Supervised by specialists, the platform will address both the theoretical foundations and practical application of Hadith authentication.

Meanwhile, poet and scholar Dr Hassan al-Ni'mah underlined the importance of continuing to study Islamic heritage while engaging with contemporary intellectual

and scientific developments.

He highlighted the diverse approaches Muslim scholars developed throughout history, including Naql (transmission) and Naqd (critical analysis), which have shaped the examination of religious texts and advanced knowledge.

Dr al-Ni'mah stressed the need to present Islamic intellectual heritage in ways that enable younger generations to understand its significance and draw on its principles to address contemporary questions.

Keeping pace with scientific and intellectual progress does not require abandoning established religious foundations, he said, but it does call for developing more effective approaches to teaching, explaining, and communicating knowledge.

He also emphasised the importance of preserving Arab and Islamic history to safeguard cultural identity, strengthen awareness of civilisational roots, and ensure that the achievements of earlier scholars continue to inform future generations.

The fifth edition of the Ministry of Culture's Seminar Season ran from October 1 to 11, offering a programme of cultural and intellectual discussions designed to encourage dialogue and knowledge exchange among academics, researchers and intellectuals.

Participating institutions included the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, and Lusail University, reflecting efforts to strengthen academic and cultural partnerships and broaden engagement with issues relating to heritage, knowledge, and contemporary thought.

Qatar taking strides in inclusive learning expansion in education

QNA
Doha

Director of the Special Education and Inclusive Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Amina Ali al-Mulla, affirmed that the expansion of the inclusive education system is advancing in parallel with enhancing school readiness, qualifying specialised staff, providing assistive educational tools and equipment, and developing monitoring and assessment mechanisms to meet students' diverse educational needs.

Al-Mulla said broadening inclusive education services for students with disabilities constitutes a key pillar in the ministry's strategy to advance special education. She noted that these services are currently available across 81 government schools, in addition to 18 schools in outlying areas, bringing educational support closer to students and their families.

She explained that expanding inclusive education goes beyond increasing the number of participating schools, but also enhancing the quality of academic and support services delivered to students.

Regarding preparations for accrediting new inclusive schools, al-Mulla indicated that the process begins by studying geographical distribution and selecting suitable campuses. This is followed by preparing the learning environment to align with the needs of students with disabilities through appropriate furniture, modern facilities, and assistive learning Aids. She added that individual educational plans (IEPs) are developed and tailored to each student's specific needs and capabilities. Alongside recruiting specialised academic and administrative staff, training and professional qualification programs are conducted to raise their competencies in addressing students' educational requirements.

Al-Mulla emphasised the ministry's commitment to foster a culture of teamwork within schools, making the support of students with disabilities a shared institutional responsibility rather than the sole remit of special education teachers. She stressed that the true success of integration is measured by its tangible impact on student learning, active participation, and independence, rather than mere enrollment figures or facility counts. Addressing the integration of students



Amina Ali al-Mulla

with hearing impairments, the Director noted that the ministry is developing transition pathways from specialised schools into inclusive settings. She explained that integrating fifth- and sixth-grade students from Audio Education Complex into Umm Al Qura and Zekreet schools serves as a structured educational pilot aimed at enabling students to learn alongside their peers, fostering their academic and social engagement.

She pointed out that this initiative will yield vital performance indicators regarding school readiness and requirements for integration at higher educational stages. Prior to implementation, the educational environment is audited to ensure the removal of communication barriers, providing assistive technologies, modern educational tools, and certified sign-language specialists within inclusive schools. Al-Mulla stated that integrating fifth- and sixth-grade students during the current 2026/2027 academic year serves as a preparatory step for an expanded rollout during the 2027/2028 academic year, covering the integration of Audio Education Complex students into preparatory and secondary government schools.

Within the framework of developing specialised education facilities, she highlighted the opening of Al-Hidaya Special Needs School in the Mebaireek area. She affirmed that the ministry relies on comprehensive individual assessments to determine the optimal learning environment for each student. While inclusive education represents the most suitable option for many, others require specialised environments offering intensive therapeutic services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language.

Manarat to embed AI, interconnected machine networks across smart factories

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

AI-driven predictive analytics and interconnected machine networks are set to anchor operations at Qatar Development Bank's (QDB) Advanced Manufacturing Hub (Manarat), an official has said.

Dr Abdulla Hamad al-Qahtani, senior manager of Manufacturing Hub at QDB, in a conversation with *Gulf Times* that the complex is planned to feature 16 interconnected industrial units equipped with Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies.

He said the operational setup relies on Internet of Things (IoT) sensors to link machinery directly to a central AI command centre, enabling predictive maintenance, operational risk mitigation, and real-time inventory management. The initiative supports the goals of the Third National Development Strategy (NDS3) by advancing industrial technology adoption across Qatar, he emphasised.

"One of the main purposes of Manarat is to elaborate on the adoption of Industry 4.0. Those sensors will capture data and transfer them to a central command enabled with AI to give



Dr Abdulla Hamad al-Qahtani, senior manager of Manufacturing Hub at Qatar Development Bank. PICTURE: Thajudheen.

preventive maintenance and warnings if there is a reduction in raw materials. The factories

will be interconnected to enable the activation of the value chain among all facilities," Dr al-Qahtani explained.

Rather than functioning solely as ready-built factory real estate, Manarat provides detailed diagnostic assessments, lean manufacturing consultancy, and digital transformation readiness evaluations for incubated firms, Dr al-Qahtani noted.

He said the ecosystem facilitates cross-factory supply chain synergies, allowing tenant facilities to share specialised capabilities such as additive manufacturing and 3D printing internally.

The digital framework aims to

expand the country's deep-tech manufacturing pipeline across target sectors, including medical devices, pharmaceuticals, robotics, and advanced chemicals, he said.

Dr al-Qahtani stated that international firms establishing operations within the hub can retain up to 100% foreign ownership while benefiting from QDB advisory services, financing solutions, and export insurance.

"Targeted entities are advanced-manufacturing companies with clearly defined operational plans and integrated Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies," Dr al-Qahtani noted.

He said applications for tenancy are currently open through QDB's electronic portal.

The selection procedure consists of two stages, starting with an initial eligibility screening followed by a comprehensive feasibility study and detailed business plan submission.

Located in the SME Industrial Area, the facilities are targeted for completion by the end of this year, providing two layout configurations ranging from 695 to 1,210sq m equipped with power capacities up to 500kW.

"We are targeting completion of the facility by the end of this year," Dr al-Qahtani said.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MOHAMMAD ISMAEEL HAIDAR ALI

holder of

Indian Passport No. I0660518
QID No.28435628414

hereby change my name

from

MOHAMMAD ISMAEEL HAIDAR ALI

to

SAMSHUL HAK

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

Visual Arts Centre explores enduring legacy of gypsum ornamentation

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Culture's Visual Arts Centre organised a lecture exploring gypsum ornamentation and its role in reconstituting the legacy of traditional architecture through contemporary expression.

Delivered by Mohammed Saeed al-Bloushi, a cultural heritage expert at Qatar's Ministry of Culture, the lecture highlighted the role of gypsum ornamentation in crafting traditional architecture and showcasing the cultural identity and visual memory of a place through a combination of patterns and forms.

The session shed light on mechanisms for repurposing these traditional arts through contemporary approaches and artistic visions. Al-Bloushi opened the lecture by pointing out that gypsum ornamentation wasn't a mere decorative afterthought added once construction had been completed. Rather, he explained, it



was an integral component of a building's original design, closely related to the dimensions and functions of its spaces, ceiling heights, and the interplay of light and shadow.

Al-Bloushi elucidated how gypsum's remarkable malleability and suitability for carving and casting enabled traditional artisans to transform a simple material readily available in their surroundings into a rich artistic medium

characterised by lines, masses, and voids that interact continuously with light.

He reviewed the principal patterns of gypsum ornamentation, foremost among them geometric designs founded on precise relationships of repetition, rotation, symmetry, and interlacing. The presenter explained that the apparent complexity of these compositions stems from simple rules that recur and overlap to create an in-

tegrated visual system. This approach has significant parallels with contemporary computational design.

Al-Bloushi further stressed that local architectural identity can't be reduced to a particular form or decorative motif. Rather, it is the product of a broader interplay among materials, climate, craftsmanship, social memory, and place.

The lecture also addressed the challenges besetting efforts to preserve gypsum ornamentation, given that the materials from which it is made are highly susceptible to environmental factors and conditions. In conclusion, the session emphasised the importance of moving architectural heritage beyond mere documentation and preservation toward inspiration and contemporary expression.

Al-Bloushi stressed that the true value of gypsum ornamentation lies in understanding its relationship with light, mass, and human scale, thereby enabling its underlying design principles to inform contemporary artistic practice.

Why Saudi defences are struggling to fend off relentless Houthi attacks?

AFP
Dubai

Saudi Arabia has poured vast sums into advanced weaponry, yet recent deadly strikes, particularly at Riyadh airport, have exposed shortcomings in its ability to fend off relentless Houthi attacks.

The deadliest attack in Saudi Arabia in more than a decade struck Riyadh airport on Saturday, killing 12 people and wounding more than 300, forcing diplomatic missions to warn their citizens to avoid the facility.

The repeated missile and drone strikes have also damaged the oil-rich kingdom's reputation for stability.

The repeated Houthi attacks are stretching Saudi air defences and likely depleting interceptors, which reports suggest have been in short supply worldwide.

Saudis have been able to intercept attacks across the country, but several strikes, including ones targeting oil facilities and those against Riyadh's airport, have snuck through.

King Khalid International Airport is one of the world's largest by land area, covering an area of 225 square kilometres about 35 kilometres from the city centre.

Andreas Krieg from the London-based MENA Analytica risk firm said that "even a layered system combining Patriot, THAAD, fighter aircraft and other sensors cannot create an impermeable dome over a country the size of Saudi Arabia", which spans around 2.2mn square kilometres.

They have "to defend Riyadh, airports, oil facilities, military bases, the holy cities and a vast amount of critical infrastructure continuously", he added.

Saudi Arabia has limited military-industrial capacity and has therefore spent heavily on imported cutting-edge weaponry.

Historically, it has relied on a large presence of foreign personnel, contractors and trainers to supplement its forces.

Major weapons purchases from Western manufacturers – including American, British and French companies – have become a defining feature of Saudi defence policy and a diplomatic



General view of Kingdom Tower in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (Reuters)

strategy to curry favour with allies.

Krieg said that while Saudi defences are intercepting many incoming attacks, "the Houthis do not need to penetrate the system every time" to achieve their goals.

All they need is the occasional hit, and the repeated recent strikes on Riyadh's airport show that they "retain the ability to generate follow-on attacks at

strategic range", he added.

The surge in Houthi attacks comes as the long-running Yemeni civil war – in which a Saudi-led coalition backs the internationally recognised government against the group – has reignited in recent months.

Thomas Juneau, security analyst at Ottawa University, said that Houthis want to "rewrite the rules of the game."

With Saudi warplanes attacking Sanaa airport, which is under Houthi control, the Iran-backed group wants "to do to Saudi Arabia what Saudi Arabia does to them", he added.

The Houthi movement, also known as Ansar Allah, has tens of thousands of fighters that are well-trained, tenacious and battle-hardened in Yemen's harsh, mountainous terrain.

Their missiles and drones have for years posed a threat to oil-rich Gulf neighbours, and have recently reached as far as Israel.

By targeting critical Saudi infrastructure, Houthis are sending a clear message that "the price of peace keeps on going up", Juneau said, referring to hopes of finally resolving the Yemen war.

"For Saudi Arabia, this is an absolute disaster because Saudi Arabia has been trying to extricate itself from the war in Yemen for several years," he added.

"The airport matters enormously" because it is central to Saudi Vision 2030, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which aims to make Riyadh a major hub for tourists, multinational com-

panies, and international events, Krieg said.

"The Houthis understand that."

Krieg warned that while disrupting Riyadh's airport may not erode Saudi military power, repeated attacks inflict economic and psychological costs that exceed the physical damage.

Saturday's airport attack was the deadliest in the kingdom since a suicide bombing incident that occurred in 2015.

It also came on the eve of the country's high-profile convention and entertainment season, with the WPC Energy Congress opening in Riyadh yesterday.

Authorities previously kept citizens occasionally informed through text-message alerts of impending attacks.

But, those warnings have recently stopped, leaving many citizens wary.

On Saturday, worried diplomatic missions complained of not being regularly briefed by Saudi officials.

Several embassies advised their citizens to avoid Riyadh airport hours before Saudi authorities issued their first official statement.

One year on, Palestinians refute ceasefire in Gaza

AFP
Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

One year after a US-brokered ceasefire was announced in the Gaza Strip, residents still living in displacement camps under near-daily Israeli airstrikes say the truce has not brought the promised peace.

Israel has reduced the intensity of its attacks but has kept up its strikes and now controls about 70% of Gaza, while the reconstruction of the devastated Palestinian territory called for under the ceasefire plan has still not materialised.

"Nothing has changed for the better; everything has gotten worse, they lie to us, it is all lies," Fatima Awkal, a displaced woman in Gaza City, told AFP.

"Martyrs are still falling, people are still being injured, the shelling continues, and we cannot even find a moment's peace from the constant buzzing of the drones overhead."

On the streets of Gaza City, rows of white tents line passageways that have been cleared of rubble from destroyed homes, while in the distance blown-out windows gape from the facades of buildings that remain standing.

Ahmed Jonaïd, another displaced Palestinian in Gaza City, said he had hoped to return home after the ceasefire. "We thought we would experience some happiness and return to our homes. Instead, we see ourselves suffering in refugee camps, sleeping on makeshift mats," the 51-year-old said as he carried two jerricans of water back to his tent.

Almost all of Gaza's more than 2mn residents were displaced at least once during the war. With

82% of all standing structures in Gaza either damaged or destroyed as of mid-2026 per the UN, many residents still live in tents or makeshift shelters, where overcrowding and a lack of hygiene has led to outbreaks of disease.

Ahmed Shawan, a doctor at a hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis, said that he had yet to see the ceasefire take effect on the ground.

"It has been a full year since the ceasefire was declared, yet it exists only on paper," he said.

The second phase of the agreement was supposed to include a political transition away from rule by the movement Hamas, with technocrat Ali Shaath appointed head of a new National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG).

But Hamas effectively remains in charge of security, and Shaath has taken a low profile.

Five countries including Morocco have agreed to join the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) tasked with preparing for the post-war period, but troops have yet to start operating in Gaza.

Israel controls all entry points into the territory and continues to allow in only a limited amount of aid, which keeps the price of basic goods too high for ordinary Gazans like Ismail Hamouda.

The 47-year-old father, who was displaced from Jabaliya in the north to Gaza City, ticked off the things residents still lack – potable water, food, financial assistance.

"Here in the displacement camps, we thought that after a year of ceasefire things would improve and get better," he said. "Unfortunately, the situation is worsening gradually... (and) we are still displaced."



Palestinians sift through the rubble at the site of a house targeted in an Israeli airstrike in Al-Zawayda, central Gaza Strip yesterday. (AFP)

Iran says US response to Hormuz proposal 'insufficient'

Reuter
Dubai

The United States' response to Iran's seven conditions in a proposal to reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz was "insufficient", Iran's security chief, Mohsen Rezaei, was quoted by state media yesterday as saying.

Iran presented a proposal during the UN General Assembly under which the Strait of Hormuz waterway could be reopened and normal mari-

time passage restored within seven days if the conditions were met, to which the US later replied via Qatari intermediaries.

Washington needs to clarify the issues that remain unclear to Tehran, Rezaei, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said. He added that Iran has set conditions for reopening the Hormuz Strait, which it expects US to meet. "We presented seven conditions to the Americans and clearly stated that the Strait of

Hormuz would not be opened to them, and no negotiations would take place, until these conditions are met."

The White House did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Rezaei said Iran is "no longer in the process of responding to the Americans".

"In their response, they have accepted some of our conditions, while others remain unclear," he added.

Tehran said late in September that it had received a US

response to its latest proposal to resurrect the collapsed ceasefire in the Gulf, days after US President Donald Trump said he had rejected it.

Qatar and other mediators have transmitted messages between Washington and Tehran in an effort to end the conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the conduit for a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas before the war that began at the end of February with US and Israeli attacks on Iran.

Djibouti boat wreck leaves 139 dead, 84 missing: UN

AFP
Nairobi

At least 139 migrants died, including 15 children, and 84 went missing when an overcrowded boat sank while heading from Djibouti to Yemen, a UN agency said yesterday.

The vessel was carrying 305 people, most of them Ethiopian, when it capsized north of the Djibouti town of Obock on the night of October 8-9, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a statement.

"Survivors told me that the boat started to sink backwards as soon as they got in it," Alexandre Coissac, IOM chief of mission in Djibouti, told AFP.

"This is a devastating loss of life," he said earlier in the statement.

"Our thoughts are with the survivors and the families who have lost loved ones or remain without news of their relatives."

The IOM gave an initial toll of 109 dead and 116 missing, and revised it to 139 dead and 84 missing in a later statement after more bodies were recovered.

Coissac said IOM teams were on the ground alongside Djiboutian authorities to provide emergency aid: "This tragedy is a stark reminder of the dangers faced by migrants along this migration corridor as they seek economic opportunities" by trying to cross the Bab al-Mandab Strait to Yemen and then reach Gulf countries.

Coissac said he had spoken to one survivor of the wreck who came from the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, where rebels are battling the federal government in a recent flare-up of violence.

Among the 109 bodies earlier recovered were 52 men, 42 women and 15 children – nine girls and six boys – the initial statement said.

Eighty-two people survived the shipwreck, all Ethiopian nationals, according to the updated toll.

"Poverty, insecurity and the growing impacts of climate change drive many to under-



IOM workers receive migrants after a boat capsized while sailing from Djibouti to Yemen yesterday. (Reuters)

take this journey, despite mounting instability across the Middle East," the IOM said.

The IOM said it was assisting 64 survivors at a migrant centre in Obock.

"Djiboutian authorities are continuing search and rescue operations as fears grow for those still missing."

It called it "one of the deadliest shipwrecks recorded" on the route.

IOM spokesman Kennedy Omondi Okoth told AFP this week that 178,000 people had arrived in Djibouti from Ethiopia from January to October this year.

Since September 10, the IOM detected more than 20,000 crossings to Djibouti from Ethiopia, despite a surge in conflict in Yemen.

The country is stricken by fighting between the Saudi-backed government and Tehran-backed Houthi rebels, who have joined in the regional conflict involving the US and its allies against Iran.

Coissac said 150 of the people on the boat that sank off Djibouti had previously been turned back from Yemen but had attempted the crossing again. In 2025, more than 900 migrants died or went missing along the sea

route to Yemen and the number attempting the journey increased by 18 %, the IOM said.

A shipwreck in March 2026 left nine people dead and 45 missing. Okoth said most of the people attempting the journey were from Ethiopia or Somalia. He said many of them were ending up "stranded" in Djibouti.

"No one gets into a boat like that unless they believe there is no other safe way," said IOM Director General Amy Pope in a statement.

"We cannot keep treating these deaths as normal. Safe and legal pathways save lives. I am asking governments and donors to act before the next boat goes down."

The IOM urged "donors and partners to strengthen support for Djibouti's response, including search and rescue operations and life-saving assistance".

The African Union Commission chairman expressed his "profound sorrow over the tragic loss of life" in a statement. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf also stressed the urgent need to "address the root causes of irregular migration, combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, and promote safe, orderly and regular migration".

Two killed during olive harvest in south Lebanon

AFP
Jibshit, Lebanon

Two men were killed in south Lebanon yesterday, one by Israeli shelling and the other by an explosive remnant of war, as they took part in the annual olive harvest, according to official media and a local mayor.

South Lebanon has been the scene of two wars since 2023 between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah, and Israeli troops still occupy a band of territory 10 kilometres wide running along the border.

The official National News Agency (NNA) said one of the men, a retired soldier, was killed in Yater, in Bint Jbeil district, "after Israeli artillery shelling targeted the outskirts of the town while he was inspecting his land and olive harvest".

NNA also reported that "a foreign object" left over from Israeli operations in the village of Froun, in the same district, exploded and killed an engineer as he and others tended their trees.

The engineer had come down from Beirut, where he lives, for the harvest, Froun mayor Hassan Bazzi said.

The incident prompted local residents to call off the harvest and wait for "the Lebanese army to complete the decontamination of the village", he .

Since a framework agreement between Lebanon and Israel was struck in June, the violence in the south has diminished but not stopped.

Israel continues to carry out sporadic strikes and demolitions in and around the territory it occupies, while Hezbollah refuses to submit to government plans to disarm it.

About eight kilometres away, in Jibshit, volunteers from the north

came to help locals with the harvest in a show of solidarity.

"From north to south, one people and one land," said organiser Ahmad Chahhal.

As workers swatted at branches to make the olives fall, an AFP photographer saw drones and heard fighter jets overhead, and explosions could be heard in the distance.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war in early March by launching attacks against Israel in support of its backer Iran. Israel responded with an intense bombing campaign and a ground invasion.

Construction waste removed from desert area

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has removed construction waste from the Bu Hesayya area in central Qatar.

The ministry received a report of the waste, so a specialised team from the Wildlife Protection Department immediately went to the site and took the necessary measures to collect and remove it. The Ministry stressed the importance of disposing of waste at designated locations, particularly construction waste, warning that indiscriminate dumping threatens the natural environment and vegetation cover.

The Ministry also urged the public to help keep wilderness areas clean, comply with environmental regulations, and report any environmental violations by contacting the Environmental Operations Room at 16066.



Traumatised people in Panama begin earthquake recovery

AFP
Chitré, Panama

Residents near the epicentre of a major earthquake in southern Panama began cleaning up on Saturday, traumatised by the previous day's heavy shaking that left widespread damage but so far no reported deaths.

"This is something we've never seen before. We weren't prepared for this kind of event," said Aldulfo Quintero as he cleared debris from a store in Chitre, about 250 km southwest of Panama City.

The 41-year-old told AFP he has a "great fear" that a new earthquake could strike any moment.

After the initial 7.7-magnitude quake around midday Friday, over 100 aftershocks have been recorded, some as strong as magnitude 6.0.



A collapsed house in Tonosi, located near Panama City. (AFP)

Like many others in Chitre, the capital of hard-hit Herrera province, 28-year-old Yakshuri Castillo chose to sleep outdoors due to fears of another quake.

She told AFP she "went into shock" when the first quake struck.

Dozens of homes were damaged in the city, whose 66,000 residents were still without electricity on Saturday.

The epicentre of the initial quake was registered by the US Geological Survey (USGS) about

60 kilometers away, near the border of Herrera, Los Santos, Veraguas provinces.

Earthquakes are rare in Panama and usually occur in western Chiriqui province, bordering Costa Rica. Strong shaking in Panama City, over 200 km from the epicentre, sent panicked people pouring into the streets from the capital's numerous high-rise buildings.

Authorities are still assessing the damage in remote areas. Several communities have been cut off due to roadways damaged by the quake. "The disaster we are facing is massive," President Jose Raul Mulino said upon arriving in one of the affected areas.

The United States, which counts Panama among the members of President Donald Trump's new "Shield of the Americas" initiative, has pledged rapid support.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on X on Friday that he was "closely monitoring" the situation, with his office "rapidly mobilising resources and personnel to assist."

The top US military commander in the region, Francis Donovan, has "directed immediate support to help the people of Panama, including on-the-ground support from rotary-wing aircraft... and the airlift of key personnel and supplies into the country," US Southern Command said in a statement on Saturday.

The Panamanian quake is at least the fourth quake this year in Latin America surpassing 7.0 in magnitude, after devastating back-to-back earthquakes in Venezuela's Guaira in June and a powerful earthquake in western Colombia in August.

Ethiopia intel chief visits flashpoint Tigray region

Ethiopia's intelligence chief and a federal minister travelled to the regional capital of the breakaway Tigray region yesterday, as flights there resumed after a two-week suspension due to fighting.

Ethiopia accuses Eritrea of backing the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) forces, which seized control of Tigray's main airport in Mekelle on September 23 but abandoned the city last week. On board the first Ethiopian Airlines flight from Addis Ababa to land there after the end of the suspension were Ethiopia's head of intelligence Redwan Hussein. He was accompanied by Ethiopia's minister for East African affairs Getachew Reda, a former Tigrayan rebel leader. (AFP)

Trump says Russia and Ukraine agree to 'energy ceasefire'

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump said in a brief statement yesterday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to halt strikes on each other's energy infrastructure, prompting surprise from Ukraine's leader, who said the announcement was "news for me".

There was no immediate comment from Russia on Trump's claim. Russia has launched waves of attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure since invading in February 2022, knocking out power and heating to millions during freezing temperatures, while Ukraine has systematically struck Russian oil refineries that it says fund the war.

Ukraine's largest private energy provider, DTEK, announced fresh power outages in the capital Kyiv yesterday amid the attacks.

"Effective immediately, there is an ENERGY CEASEFIRE in the War between Russia and Ukraine. Both parties have agreed. Do not break it!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social network, without further details.

Earlier yesterday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated that his country would be ready to stop hitting Russian oil refineries if Russia curbed its own attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Reacting to Trump's ceasefire announcement, Zelensky told the Axios news outlet that it was "news for me".

Prices at US gasoline and diesel pumps have surged since late February, when joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran prompted Tehran to block the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway used for oil exports from the Gulf.



President Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Tennessee. (Reuters)

Trump's announcement came amid mounting tensions between Trump and Zelensky over an agreement between Russia and the United States on diesel.

Zelensky said the deal was a "weak decision", while several of Ukraine's European allies pledged to increase pressure on Moscow, despite the agreement.

The deal would see Moscow release large amounts of diesel onto the global market in exchange for temporary sanctions relief.

Addressing the criticism on Saturday, Trump claimed Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries were to blame for rising diesel prices, adding that it was "time for Ukraine to get a new president".

Zelensky pushed back on the suggestion in an interview yesterday.

"First of all, with all respect to President Trump, it's up to our society, up to our people to choose one or another leader,"

Zelensky told ABC News.

Germany's foreign minister said yesterday that Berlin continued to "fully support" Zelensky.

"Europe needs stability and that means that we are very clearly continuing to stay by the side of Ukraine and its government," Johann Wadephul said in Berlin.

And in Kyiv, several residents expressed concern about Trump's call for Zelensky to be replaced.

"I believe our president is the best, and Americans should think about their own president," said 40-year-old local Olesia Goncharuk.

"We Ukrainians decide our own fate and our own freedom, and we are free people," she told AFP.

The row between Zelensky and Trump comes weeks before closely-fought US elections dominated by voter frustration over the cost of living.

After outrage, power back in Cuba

AFP
Havana

Power was restored in eastern Cuba on Saturday, several hours after an outage caused by a partial grid failure, the national power company said, as the island reels from a months-long US oil blockade.

"The partial disconnection of the national grid in the eastern region is over," Union Electrica de Cuba (UNE) said.

Nearly three hours earlier, the company said a failure on the line linking Nuevitas to Tunas province had sparked an outage, without specifying how many provinces were affected.

Cuba, a nation of 9.4mn people, has suffered repeated power outages, and rolling blackouts can last up to 20 hours a day. These outages also affect water supply and telephone services.

The problems are due in part to the aging energy infrastructure, with power plants falling in disrepair and requiring weeks of maintenance. Since January, the US has effectively cut off the oil supply to Cuba as part of a multi-faceted pressure campaign, complicating the delivery of fuel needed to keep backup generators running.

Cuba has experienced seven nationwide blackouts since the start of the year, and a dozen since late 2024. UNE says fuel shortages make the network more vulnerable to outages.

Two years ago, the government launched a major program for the installation of solar panels with China's backing. According to official data, renewable sources account for 21% of Cuba's energy mix.

Relations between the US and Cuba have been tense since the start of 2026, when US forces captured Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, a major ally of Havana.

The administration of US President Donald Trump has asserted that Cuba, located 150 km off the coast of Florida, poses an "extraordinary threat" to US national security and has not ruled out military intervention to prompt economic and political reforms.

Dozens feared dead in Sudan after airstrikes on border gold mine

AFP
Khartoum

Dozens of Sudanese workers are feared dead after a series of airstrikes hit a sprawling gold mine near the border with Egypt, forcing hundreds to flee the site, two survivors told AFP yesterday.

Abdelaziz Youssef, one of the surviving miners, told AFP a jet appeared overhead at around 8:00am on Saturday and launched strikes on Jabal al-Uqaydat, an informal gold mining site in the border area near the Red Sea.

"It struck five times, many people were killed," he said, though he was unable to count the bodies in the chaos.

"We ran up the mountain terrified of another strike."

Another survivor, Sharaf Ali, told AFP thousands were working at the remote site when it was hit. "After the airstrike people dispersed everywhere, some people came to Al-Ansary market, others went in the other direction, that's why no one knows how many exactly were killed," he said from the gold market.

Al-Ansary lies just south of the Halayeb triangle, a disputed border area claimed by both Sudan and Egypt. The rugged mountainous region stretches for hundreds of kilometres and is home to bountiful gold deposits.

Both survivors said they saw bodies on the ground as they fled, with many more feared trapped under the rubble, hours away from any urban centre.

Local Sudanese media reported dozens killed and hundreds more injured. Since April 2023, the war between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has killed more than 200,000 people and created a deep humanitarian crisis.

The situation has pushed many Sudanese into the dangerous gold mining industry, which fuels both sides' war efforts.

It was not immediately clear who was behind Saturday's attack, which took place on the army-controlled side of the country. The RSF is not known to have fighter jets in its arsenal.

It was the second attack on Jabal al-Uqaydat this year, after reports of Egyptian fighter jets killing 23 miners in June in a similar strike.

The Egyptian army at the time said it had conducted a "large-scale operation within Egyptian territory". It said 223 people were detained, including 136 foreign nationals, and has announced a campaign to counter "illegal gold mining and arms smuggling" in the area.

Egypt is a key ally of Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, but considers the war at its border a major threat to its security.



President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks to the media. (Reuters)

Trump calls Nobel Peace Prize pick 'disgraceful'

AFP
Syracuse, US

US President Donald Trump slammed the "disgraceful" Nobel Peace Prize choice on Friday as leaving an "indelible stain" on Norway, arguing that the award should have gone to him.

South African judge and human rights champion Navi Pillay won the prestigious prize on Friday in recognition of her work against war crimes and crimes against humanity. But Trump labelled the Norwegian Nobel Committee's choice as "a disgraceful and embarrassing decision", telling a rally of his supporters in Syracuse, New York he had "never heard of" Pillay.

"The US of America, represented by me as your president, should have received the Nobel Peace Prize, but didn't," he said, adding, the choice of Pillay as laureate left "an indelible stain on the country of Norway".

Since returning to the White House in January 2025, Trump has made no secret of his desire to win the Nobel Peace prize.

Storm strengthens near western Mexico

AFP
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Hurricane Simon strengthened into a powerful Category 4 storm and was expected to make landfall or skirt the coast of west-central Mexico yesterday, according to the US National Hurricane Centre.

Fluctuations in strength are expected until the core of Simon reaches the coast, with a maximum wind speed of 249 km per hour, the NHC said in an update.

"Significant or catastrophic wind, surge, and rainfall appears likely over portions of west-central Mexico" on Saturday night and yesterday, the centre added.

"Preparations to protect life and property should be rushed to completion shortly in the hurricane warning area."

It comes as Florida assesses the damage from Isaías, the first hurricane of the Atlantic season, which killed at least four people in the southeastern US.

Simon is the latest in a busy hurricane season in the Pacific, where the powerful El Nino ocean warming phenomenon is weakening wind shear, allowing the storms to gain in strength.

Mexico's Navy had evacuated



Marines wade through a flooded street as Hurricane Simon approaches Mexico's Pacific coast. (Reuters)

around 100 people from settlements along the country's west coast due to the storm. "Three years ago, we lost everything," said Elena Gulmas, 63, in reference to 2023's Hurricane Lidia. "Now I say, life comes first."

In the Pacific tourist resort of Puerto Vallarta, the skies were cloudy on Saturday but the sea was still relatively calm.

The government of Jalisco state, where Puerto Vallarta is located, declared a red alert for several municipalities. The airport has also suspended operations.

Torrential rains caused by Simon have already caused flooding

in Acapulco, another major tourist destination further south.

But residents of Puerto Vallarta, which sits on a huge horseshoe-shaped bay that helps defuse the power of a hurricane, appeared largely unfazed by the threat. While shop owners sandbagged the entrances to their stores and boarded up the doors and windows, there was little sense of impending disaster.

"What people are most scared of is that the water will reach a tall height... like it did with Hurricane Kenna," said Paulina Perez, who owns a furniture boutique on the boardwalk.

Lula accuses Meta of election interference

AFP
Brasilia

The campaign of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva accused tech giant Meta of election interference on Saturday after his social media content was allegedly blocked on the company's platforms.

The leftist leader is seeking a fourth non-consecutive term in the October 25 runoff, where he will face Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, the son of far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro.

In a statement, Lula's campaign reported instances where platforms owned by Meta — the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram — allegedly restricted the distribution of his content.

The campaign claimed that in recent days, Meta "prevented President Lula's profile from promoting Instagram feed posts," while a post from his official account "experienced an interruption in view counts, which affected its reach."

It also said that prior to last

Sunday's first round of voting — in which Flavio Bolsonaro finished first — the profiles of Lula and other leftist leaders "suddenly disappeared from Instagram's search function."

"The series of technical issues...raises strong suspicions that Meta's actions constitute an attempt to interfere in the Brazilian electoral process to the benefit of Flavio Bolsonaro's candidacy," the statement added.

Meta's Brazil office denied the charges, calling them "simply false" and "not supported by the facts." "Many of the technical issues mentioned did not affect only Brazil or specific accounts," Meta told AFP in an email.

"We comply with electoral regulations and are committed to a level playing field regarding the use of our platforms."

Lula's campaign has filed a complaint with the electoral court over the alleged social media blocks.

Following the first round of voting, Lula — who does not use a mobile phone — launched a social media push that includes videos of him addressing his on-line followers.

‘Cockroach’ leaders vow to keep up election protests

AFP
New Delhi

Leaders of India's youth-led “cockroach” movement yesterday pledged to press on with protests against the country's election commissioner, hours after they were released from detention, as authorities sought to thwart major demonstrations in New Delhi.

The rallies in the capital come after weeks of opposition mobilisation following allegations of misconduct during a nationwide voter roll revision that critics say could benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

The Election Commission of India, which oversees the voting process in the world's most populous nation, has denied wrongdoing.

Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), and two other leaders were released Sunday, one day after they were detained when they landed in New Delhi to take part in a protest at the Jantar Mantar site in the heart of the city.

Thousands of protesters have been detained since Saturday, according to the group and media reports.

“We will not back down,” Saurav Das, another top CJP leader, told reporters after his release.

“We urge people to come out and carry out peaceful protests,”



Saurav Das, chief spokesperson of the Cockroach Janta Party, gestures during a press conference at the Press Club of India following his release, in New Delhi, yesterday. **(Reuters)**

he added, vowing to continue until Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar resigns.

Smaller rallies took place in Delhi yesterday. Dozens of protesters were detained near Jantar Mantar, which remained blocked off, AFP journalists witnessed.

Police have not commented on the detentions.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said at least 16 journalists had also been detained, calling the police actions “unacceptable”.

“Covering events of public interest is not a crime,” RSF said in a statement. “It is their job.”

In July, protests organised by the CJP over exam irregularities forced the resignation of the education minister, marking a rare climb-down by Modi's administration.

‘Indian citizen died day after being injured in Riyadh airport attack’

The Indian embassy in Saudi Arabia said one of its citizens died yesterday after being wounded in the attack on the Riyadh airport a day earlier. “It is learnt that one Indian national injured in the Riyadh attack has unfortunately lost his life today. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased,” the embassy wrote in a statement posted on X. **(AFP)**

UK PM says Russia interfered in 2016 Brexit vote

Reuters
London

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said Russia interfered in the 2016 Brexit vote, as he warned voters in France and Germany about Moscow-backed efforts to influence their politics.

Burnham, who took over as Britain's leader in July and said last month that Britain could consider rejoining the European Union in the future, is the first British prime minister to say openly there was evidence of Russian interference in the referendum a decade ago.

“I asked the question coming to Downing Street, was there interference in the 2016 referendum from Russia? And I've had the

clear answer that yes, there was,” Burnham said in an interview with The Rest Is Politics podcast released yesterday.

Burnham did not spell out how he believed that Russia interfered in the referendum and gave no details on what evidence this statement was based.

The Russian embassy in London did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Russia has previously denied meddling in the Brexit vote, casting Britain as gripped by anti-Russian hysteria.

Burnham's comments mark a departure from those of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who campaigned to leave the EU, and said in 2020 there was no evidence of Russian interference in the referendum.

Britons voted 52-48% to leave

Protesters detained in India as ‘cockroach’ leaders are freed

Reuters
New Delhi

Police detained hundreds of protesters in Delhi for a second day yesterday as sporadic protests broke out demanding India's election chief quit, while a court ordered the release of “cockroach” movement founder Abhijeet Dipke and two other senior leaders.

Dipke and the other leaders of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a nationwide youth protest movement, were detained when their plane landed in Delhi on Saturday as the movement planned to gather thousands of people at Jantar Mantar in Central Delhi.

The court ordered their release with an undertaking to “maintain public peace”, the CJP said in a statement.

The youth movement, which has mobilised protests in recent months against a range of issues from government school infrastructure to jobs for young people, is one of the biggest political challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in his 12 years in power.

The protesters are calling for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over a revision of voter lists that critics say disproportionately benefits Modi.

Youth protesters, many of them from students organisations affiliated with India's communist parties, launched sporadic protests yesterday afternoon in Delhi before police detained them and hauled them away in vehicles.

Small protests by dozens of people were also held in the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Panaji and Pune, local media reported.

Abhita Ruheja, a protester who was detained yesterday, said the authorities had turned Delhi into a fortress.

“Is this how a democracy works? They have been scrapping rights after rights and this is turning into a dictatorship,” she said.

The All India Students' Association alleged in a post on X that those detained in Delhi were assaulted by police inside the vehicles.

A video posted on X by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) showed one of its lawmakers, John Brittas, who was briefly detained, being helped from a bus to an autorickshaw as he appeared to be in distress.

Reuters could not verify claims about detainees being assaulted by police.

Police also detained several journalists covering the protests, many of whom were carrying microphones and had their press cards prominently displayed, according to a Reuters witness.

A Delhi Police spokesperson did not respond at a media briefing to questions about the alleged assaults and detentions.

CJP's Dipke said he was going back to his home in India's western state of Maharashtra as his grandmother had died but added that the protests would continue.

“Haven't signed any bond that says we won't protest. We will hit the streets again,” he said in a post on X.

Thousands of police and paramilitary personnel continued to be deployed across Delhi, although metro stations reopened and mobile Internet services were restored after authorities locked down the city in an attempt to thwart Saturday's protests.

The police spokesperson said 2,400 people were detained on



Security personnel detain demonstrators during a protest in New Delhi by the Cockroach Janta Party yesterday. **(Reuters)**

Saturday and most were released the same night.

Opposition parties and critics of Modi's government criticised what they said was the high-handed use of force against the protesters, while a UN body called on authorities to ensure that the right to peaceful assembly was respected and fulfilled.

India's foreign ministry said the UN's statement constituted “an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of India”.

At an unusually packed hearing on yesterday, the Supreme Court recorded the government's assurance that lawyers and journalists would not be impeded while performing their duties.

Lawyers protesting outside the Supreme Court were detained briefly on Saturday, as were several reporters including a Reuters journalist.

Sporadic protests have been going on across India since the Indian Express newspaper in late September reported that Kumar's two deputies had raised several

concerns internally about voter list revisions, registration procedures and digital systems.

The Election Commission says differing views are normal in internal deliberations, and has denied favouring any party.

Election Commission data shows about 130 million names, more than the population of Japan, have been deleted from electoral rolls during the verification exercise, including 28 million people who had died, 63 million who had relocated and 30 million who could not be traced.

Modi's BJP has accused groups opposed to it of trying to undermine the country's democracy by wrongly questioning legitimate electoral processes. The Election Commission has said that voters wrongly deleted can re-enrol.

The BJP and the Commission deny allegations of manipulation, although opposition parties allege Muslim voters and other minorities, who are unlikely to support the Hindu nationalist ruling party, are disproportionately impacted by the deletions.



This video grab made from an AFPTV video taken yesterday shows flood water destroying buildings along the Budhi Gandaki river, following a flash flood caused by a dry landslide, at Sallari Chumnubri in Nepal's Gorkha district. **(AFP)**

Nepal flash floods sweep away houses, five people missing

AFP
Kathmandu

Flash floods hit central Nepal yesterday, sweeping away houses and leaving at least five people missing, officials said, weeks after devastating flooding that killed hundreds.

Videos circulating online showed a dark, debris-filled river surging through the hills in Gorkha district.

“What we know is that a dry landslide had blocked the river and then it burst to cause the flood,” national disaster agency chief Dharam Raj Uprety told AFP.

Some 45 houses were swept away, with the flood also damaging three hydropower projects and four bridges.

According to the disaster agency, at least 82 people including nine foreigners have been rescued from the affected areas.

“Five people are unaccounted for,” Uprety said.

Four helicopters were deployed to support rescue and evacuation efforts as water levels in the Budhi Gandaki continued to rise.

Authorities earlier issued an alert, urging residents to move

away from the river to safer areas.

The latest flooding comes with Nepal still recovering from devastating floods, triggered by a mountain glacial collapse on August 26, which killed more than 1,400 people and left over 5,000 missing.

“The flood looked similar... It was very scary, and it still feels like a nightmare for us,” said local official Laxmi Gurung of Chumnubri rural municipality.

“Our house is gone, we have no electricity... but there have been no casualties.”

The Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) said the floods highlight the “range of hazards capable of generating destructive floods in Himalayan river systems”.

“While response efforts must remain the immediate priority, understanding what triggered this flood, will be critical for reducing future risks and strengthening resilience,” ICIMOD's director general Pema Gyamtsho said in a statement.

Heavy rainfall in late September also triggered floods and landslides, killing at least 21 people, according to the disaster agency.

Bangladesh arrests 4 on sedition charges over defaced portrait

Police arrested four people on sedition charges in Bangladesh's capital yesterday over allegations they had defaced a portrait of the Nobel laureate and writer Rabindranath Tagore. The four people detained were accused of smearing black ink over the painting of the late poet on Saturday, just a week after it was painted on the walls of a prominent fine arts institution as part of Dhaka's urban beautification project. “They have been arrested on charges of sedition,” senior police officer Sheikh Zahidul Islam

told AFP. The offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment in Bangladesh. The suspects had sought to “create instability in society and incite religious unrest”, he said. Police said those arrested belonged to the Rashtra Sanglap Forum, a nationalist group that has campaigned against what it describes as Indian influence in Bangladesh. Tagore, who won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote Bangladesh's national anthem, “Amar Sonar Bangla”. **(AFP)**

Indonesia moves 8 endangered orangutans to safety

Reuters
Jakarta

Indonesian authorities and conservation workers successfully moved eight orangutans to a safe location after the endangered primates' homes were destroyed by wildfires in the forests of Borneo, they said yesterday.

The southeast Asian nation is battling its most intense wildfires in 11 years, mainly on Sumatra and Borneo islands, and the government has warned the blazes could continue until November, aggravated by the El Niño weather pattern.

Three mother-child pairs and two adolescent male orangutans were among those rescued between August and September from several locations, the Indonesian government and wildlife foundation, Yayasan Inisiasi Alam Rehabilitasi Indonesia (YIARI) said in a statement.



A Borneo orangutan (Pongo pygmaeus) named Mama Lifa, who was rescued from an area affected by wildfires, leaves a cage during translocation at Batu Nyambu protected forest area in Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan province, Indonesia. **(Reuters)**

“Their relocation to Batu Nyambu protected forest is expected to give the eight orangutans a chance to return to living naturally,” the statement read.

Orangutans are critically endangered great apes found in the wild only on the Southeast Asian

islands of Borneo and Sumatra, with Indonesia home to all three recognised species, according to the World Wildlife Fund. Populations have declined due to deforestation, wildfires and poaching.

The relocation operation took six hours by car, one hour on

boats, and two more hours on foot, with the orangutans in cages carried on bamboo poles. Before they were moved, YIARI conservationists checked the animals' health.

Since August, the West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency and YIARI have rescued 46 orangutans affected by fires, agency head Murlan Dame-ria Pane said.

From January to July this year, fires burned around 202,000 hectares (500,000 acres) in Indonesia. No official data for subsequent months has been released, but non-governmental organisations estimate fires have burned at least 600,000 hectares more since.

Haze from the fires has caused 175,000 cases of respiratory illness in Indonesia, with the smog affecting neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia where many schools were closed on Friday as air quality deteriorated.



What is the International Criminal Court?

Navanethem “Navi” Pillay, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, has been a judge on several international courts, including the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The ICC was established in 2002 to prosecute individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression when member states are unwilling or unable to do so themselves.

It can prosecute crimes committed by nationals of member states or on the territory of member states by other actors. It has 125 member states. The court's budget for 2026 is about €196mn (\$222mn).

The ICC is conducting investigations in the Palestinian territories, Ukraine, African states such as Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Venezuela, Myanmar and the Philippines.

It says there have been 34 cases before the court, some with more than one defendant. ICC judges have issued 68 arrest warrants.

Notable ICC suspects are Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accused of being criminally responsible for acts including murder, persecution and using starvation as a weapon of war in the Gaza conflict, and Russian President Vladimir Putin, accused of the war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine.

Israel and Russia, neither a member of the court, have repeatedly denied committing atrocities in Gaza and Ukraine respectively and have argued that the ICC has no jurisdiction over them.

Former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte is due to go on trial on November 30 to face charges of murder and attempted murder as crimes against humanity related to his war on drugs, accusations he denies.

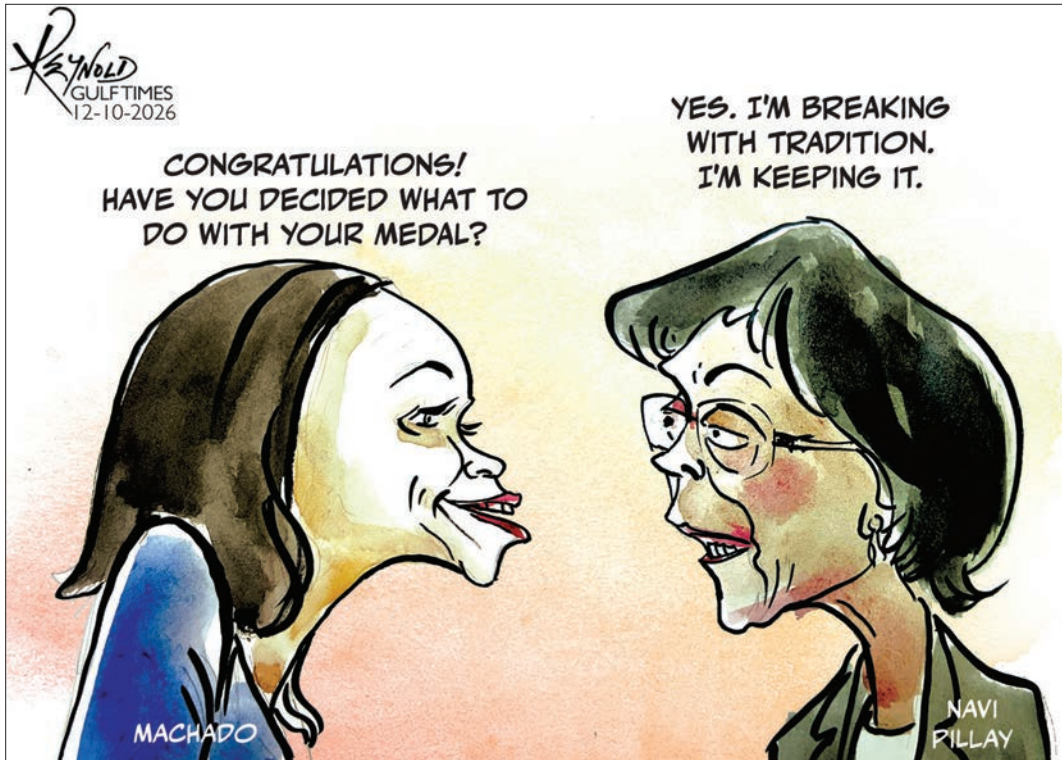
While a US delegation was present for the negotiations that produced the court's founding Rome Statute in 1998, it never became a member and always opposed ICC jurisdiction over US nationals.

Although the court is supported by many United Nations members and the European Union, other countries such as the United States, China and Russia are not members, arguing the ICC could be used for politically motivated prosecutions.

Israel is not a member and does not recognise its jurisdiction, but the Palestinian territories were admitted as an ICC member state in 2015.

This, together with a ruling by judges, means the court can look at potential war crimes carried out by Hamas fighters in Israel and by Israelis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

ICC judges have issued 15 convictions and four acquittals. – Reuters



Controlled disclosure: How the US is timing Iran war to the midterms

By Jasim al-Azzawi

At a rally in Mobile, Alabama, on October 2, President Trump told supporters that the war with Iran had cost 18 American lives. “We’ve lost 18 incredible people,” he said. “We’ve been there for a little more than six months.”

The number was not new. It has been circulating since September.

However, the venue was. A campaign stage, not a Pentagon podium, carried the message five weeks before the midterms.

The timing matters. The *Washington Post* reported on September 18 that the real toll runs higher.

Citing six officials with access to internal casualty data, the *Post* put the figure at 22 fatalities, four more than the Pentagon’s public count.

A sixth official put it at 23. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth denied the story on X, calling it “a complete LIE”. The Pentagon has not released its own reconciliation. The gap between the public number and the classified one remains open.

Trump has paired the casualty figure with a second claim. The war, he says, will end soon, and oil prices will fall once it does.

“Oil will drop like a rock as soon as we’re finished with the war, which will be very soon,” he told reporters at the White House on October 7.

Speaking in Dublin on September 12, he went further.

“I think it’ll be right after the midterms,” he said. “I would say shortly, and oil will come tumbling down when that happens.”

For a president facing an energy-driven cost-of-living complaint, a clear end date would be useful as we head into November.

Events have moved quickly since. The *Atlantic* reported on October 7 that the Pentagon had ordered US Central Command to prepare strike options that could be used before the election, citing two administration officials.

A White House official told the outlet that Trump “has all options available at any time”.

Axios reported the same day that advisers were split, with some preferring to wait until after the vote, partly out of concern that fresh American deaths could hurt Republican candidates.

Then, on October 8, Trump settled the question, for now.

“We will not be attacking Iran at any time prior to the Midterm Elections,” he wrote on Truth Social, according to Axios.

The statement does not rule out action afterward.

Sources told Axios that any resumed campaign would likely include large-scale strikes on Iranian energy facilities, infrastructure and nuclear sites.

The dispute over the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway that carries roughly a fifth of the world’s seaborne oil, sits underneath all of this.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in Athens on October 7 that Iran had “lost complete control of the Strait” and that oil flows had returned to nearly prewar levels. Hours later, Brigadier-General Mohammad Reza Naghdi, a senior adviser to the Revolutionary Guard’s commander, said the opposite.

“The Strait of Hormuz is closed, and the armed forces have full control over it,” he said, according to Iran International. “This situation will continue until Iran’s legitimate demands are met.”

He added that Iranian forces would soon block smuggling routes through the strait’s rocky passages.

US Central Command rejected the Iranian claim outright, saying roughly 20mn barrels of crude were moving through the strait along with other commercial traffic.

Both sides have an incentive to describe the strait as they wish it were: Tehran to preserve leverage, Washington to support its inflation message.



The truth likely sits between full closure and full reopening. Trump’s critics say the casualty disclosure, and the way he delivered it, understate the real cost.

When he first wrote the number on Truth Social in a post comparing the Iran war favorably to Afghanistan, “Afghanistan War: 20 years, 2,000 DEAD... Iran Military Conflict: 4 months, 18 DEAD,” the backlash came from unlikely corners.

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican and former Trump ally, said he was “bragging about killing 18 US soldiers”.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called the post “beneath contempt”.

Senator Chris Van Hollen said Trump was “downplaying” the loss of American lives.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, a likely 2028 contender, called the comparison the act of a “disgusting Little Man”.

The criticism cut across party lines in a way few Iran-war statements have.

None of this settles the underlying military question: whether limited strikes now would accomplish anything.

The *Atlantic*’s sourcing suggests even strike proponents inside the administration concede that a narrow pre-election operation would be unlikely to reopen Hormuz, lower gasoline prices before November 3, or bring Iran back to the table.

The appeal, as described in the magazine, is closer to political theater: a show of resolve timed to the news cycle, not a plan to end the war.

What happens after the vote is less constrained.

Officials cited by Axios said a broader campaign after the midterms could include strikes on Iran’s energy sector and nuclear infrastructure, which would be a significant escalation from the posture of recent months.

Israeli officials, speaking to Axios, put the odds of resumed major combat before the election at low but not zero, and said the odds “increase significantly” afterward.

The Pentagon has moved roughly 9,000-10,000 additional troops toward the region, including a third aircraft carrier, according to *Wall Street Journal* reporting relayed by The Hill.

The stakes extend well beyond Washington’s news cycle. Gulf producers have spent eight months rerouting cargoes, absorbed insurance costs and watched freight rates swing with every statement from Tehran or the White House.

A genuine reopening of Hormuz would matter more to regional economies than any American election.

A rhetorical one, declared for domestic political effect and then contradicted by Iranian forces days later, adds uncertainty without adding barrels.

Three days before Rubio’s remarks in Athens, Iran and Oman announced they had agreed on coordinates for a “safe” transit corridor through the strait, a sign that some practical arrangement exists even as the two governments dispute who controls the wider waterway.

The pattern across these threads – the casualty disclosure, the oil forecast, and the midterm pause – is consistent.

The administration is managing a six-month war through the discipline of a campaign, not only the discipline of a command structure.

A hard number, voiced by the president himself rather than a Pentagon spokesman, forecloses a worse story breaking closer to the election.

A promise that oil will fall “very soon” gives voters something to wait for.

A pledge not to strike before November 3 removes the risk of new combat deaths dominating the final weeks of the race.

That does not mean the war is ending.

It means its public presentation has been timed to a different calendar than the one the battlefield runs on.

The Strait of Hormuz remains contested in fact as well as in rhetoric. The Pentagon’s own casualty count remains unreconciled with what the *Washington Post*’s sources describe.

And the decision on whether to resume major strikes, which could reopen the question of further American deaths, has been moved to the other side of Election Day, not resolved.

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

Is Burnham’s bounce in the polls the start of something significant?



By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

Developments in British politics over the summer indicate that the two main parties – Labour and the Conservatives – may be restoring a degree of balance to a system that had appeared, earlier in 2026, to be more unpredictable than any time in recent history.

A change of prime minister from Sir Keir Starmer to Andy Burnham and results in several by-election suggest that the appeal of insurgent parties such as the Greens and Reform UK may have peaked.

In addition, the annual party conference season has shown both Labour and the Conservatives to be in confident moods as parliament reconvenes after the long summer recess.

The phrase “a week is a long time in politics” is attributed to Harold Wilson, Labour prime minister between 1964 and 1970 and again from 1974 to 1976.

His Conservative predecessor, Harold Macmillan, who held office between 1957 and 1963, had his own phrase, “events, dear boy, events” which has entered the lexicon of political sayings.

Both have applicability to the rapid turnaround of political fortunes in recent months.

Back in the spring, Starmer’s government was floundering, the Conservatives were polling at record low levels, and the rise of Reform UK and the Greens seemed for a time to be unstoppable.

In late-February, the Gorton and Denton by-election, caused by the resignation of the incumbent Labour MP, vividly illustrated the surging appeal of the Greens and Reform as they won nearly 70% of the vote between them.

Hannah Spencer captured what had been a safe Labour seat with 40.7% of the vote, Reform UK came second with 28.7%, while the Labour share of the vote collapsed by more than 25% and the Conservatives finished a distant fourth with a mere 1.9% which meant the party lost its deposit. Three months later, Reform UK won the most votes in the local elections across the United Kingdom, albeit with only 26% of the vote yet nine points ahead of the Labour Party.

The outcome of the local elections on May 7 suggested a period of extended political uncertainty lay ahead.

Reform UK appeared to have reached its voter peak at around 26% while four other parties – Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, and the Greens – were all clustered around a band of between 16% and 18% share.

It seemed for a time that the country was moving toward a chaotic five-party political system even without factoring in the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party.

Fast forward five months, and the political landscape has altered almost beyond recognition.

Pressure from Labour MPs on Starmer to step down finally led to the announcement of his resignation on June 22 and an accelerated contest to select a new leader which led to Burnham winning an uncontested leadership election on July 17.



Britain’s Prime Minister Andy Burnham. – Reuters

Having returned to the House of Commons, after a nine-year absence, by decisively beating Reform UK in a by-election at Makerfield earlier in July, Burnham almost immediately gained five points in the polls.

The revitalisation of an administration hitherto drifting to inevitable defeat was remarkable, and reminiscent of John Major’s transformation of the Conservative government after he replaced Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in November 1990.

Labour’s injection of vitality occurred just as Reform UK was experiencing a summer of setbacks largely stemming from a series of media revelations about party donors which raised questions over the judgement of its leader, Nigel Farage.

Amid the acres of generally critical news coverage, Farage abruptly resigned his parliamentary seat at Clacton on July 7 and triggered a by-election which descended into farce after all the mainstream parties chose not to field candidates and his main

opponent was a man with a bin on his head, who managed to win nearly 27% of the vote.

Farage returned to parliament weakened by what was widely seen as a cynical political stunt and still faces the findings of an investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards into an undeclared gift.

It is against this backdrop that the most recent by-election, in the London constituency of Holborn and St Pancras, took place on October 8, to fill the seat vacated by Starmer after he followed his resignation as prime minister by standing down as an MP as well.

The results confirmed the shifting balance in political fortunes as Labour comfortably held the seat and the much-vaunted challenge by the Green Party leader, Zach Polanski, fell significantly short, as he finished 13 points behind his Labour counterpart, Sagal Abdi-Wali.

Meanwhile, in pushing Reform UK into fourth place, the Conservatives managed to finish about Reform in a parliamentary by-election in England for the first time since 2024.

This built upon a party conference that was widely seen as a success for Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch.

Both Labour and the Conservatives therefore feel more confident that they have regained a measure of control over the challenges from their left and right, respectively, as the prospect of the mainstream parties being outflanked has receded, at least for now.

Ironically, it is Reform UK that now faces a challenge from its right from Restore Britain, a far-right party formed by a disaffected MP originally elected to parliament as a Reform MP in 2024.

Reform and Restore have split the right-of-centre vote in several recent elections and there may be an opportunity for the Conservatives to regain voters from Reform if the latter tries to move even farther to the right to compete with Restore.

Only time will tell whether Burnham’s bounce in the polls is the temporary uplift of a new face in power or the start of something more significant.

Major’s bounce in 1990 carried him to an unexpected general election victory in April 1992 but a similar boost to Gordon Brown when he succeeded Tony Blair in June 2007 proved to be short-lived.

With the next general election not due until 2029, there is still time for the puzzle to shift once again.

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

GULF TIMES

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Zelensky taken aback, Moscow mum as Trump announces energy ceasefire

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to halt strikes on each other's energy infrastructure, surprising Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky while Russia did not immediately confirm the deal.

Trump, whose war against Iran has led to global oil shortages, has blamed Ukraine's strikes on Russian refineries for sending diesel prices soaring, creating major risks for his party in US elections next month.

"Effective immediately, there is an ENERGY CEASEFIRE in the War between Russia and Ukraine. Both parties have agreed. Do not break it!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social network, without further details.

Zelensky appeared blindsided by Trump's announcement, telling the Axios news outlet that it was "news for me."

He subsequently said that he and Kyiv's allies were "awaiting details" of the ceasefire, noting he supports any steps toward deescalation in the conflict.

"Ukraine supports the ceasefire, and it is important that Russia support it as well," Zelensky said on his Facebook page, after speaking with the leaders of Canada, Finland and Nato.

Ukraine's largest private energy provider, DTEK, announced fresh power outages in the capital Kyiv yesterday amid the attacks.

Trump's announcement yesterday came amid mounting tensions between Trump and Zelensky over the US-Russia diesel deal.

Zelensky said the deal was a "weak decision", while several of Ukraine's European allies pledged to increase pressure on Moscow, despite the agreement.

Asked about the criticism on Saturday, Trump lashed out at Zelensky, saying it was "time for Ukraine to get a new president" who would finally settle the war.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks to the media in the Chernihiv region. (Reuters/ File Photo)

Zelensky pushed back on the suggestion in an interview yesterday. "First of all, with all respect to President Trump, it's up to our society, up to our people to choose one or another leader," Zelensky told ABC News.

He said that fuel prices were rising because of the war in the Middle East and the blocking of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. "Everybody understands it," he said.

Germany's foreign minister said yesterday that Berlin continued to "fully support" Zelensky.

"Europe needs stability and that means that we are very clearly continuing to stay by the side of Ukraine and its government," Johann Wadephul said in Berlin.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen also backed the Ukrainian leader "as he leads the fight for his people's freedom." "Fully supported the call of President Zelensky for a ceasefire that would protect global food supplies and energy infrastructure in Ukraine and Russia," von der Leyen wrote online yesterday after talking to Zelensky.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris supports a "real energy ceasefire" between Russia and Ukraine.

"Currently, Russia continues to refuse that, by lately intensifying further its strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure," Macron said yesterday, adding: "France will continue to stay by the side of Ukraine and President Zelensky."

Zelensky tells ABC he will organise elections if Russia agrees to 60-day ceasefire

Reuters
Washington

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday in response to critical comments from US President Donald Trump that he will organise elections in Ukraine if Russian President Vladimir Putin agrees to a 60-day ceasefire.

"Please tell Putin, give us two months, 60 days of total ceasefire, 60 days, and we will organise elections," Zelensky told ABC's *This Week*.

Trump on Saturday criticised Zelensky for attacking Russian oil refineries a day after the US temporarily lifted sanctions on Russian fuel that were designed to deprive Moscow of revenues to fund its war in Ukraine.

"I think it's time for Ukraine to get a new president," Trump had told reporters at the White House.

In response, Zelensky said "it's up to Ukrainians" to choose their leader and noted that Putin would also like to

change who is leading Ukraine.

He said it is easy for Ukraine to be blamed for higher fuel prices "when everybody in the world understands because of the war in (the) Middle East, the prices are rising."

Earlier yesterday, Zelensky said Ukraine was ready to halt attacks on Russian oil refineries if Moscow ceases its own strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

Under terms of the deal as described by Trump on Friday, Russia will immediately supply more than 300,000 metric tonnes of diesel to US and global markets, equal to about 2.25 million barrels of fuel. The US exports about 1.5 million barrels of diesel per day.

Trump is under pressure to bring down rising fuel prices ahead of November midterm elections that will determine whether his Republican Party will retain control of the US Congress for his final two years in office.

Many lawmakers, including Republicans, have criticised the diesel deal as rewarding Putin.

Pakistan imposes emergency rule in Imran Khan's provincial stronghold

AFP
Islamabad

Pakistan placed a northern province under emergency rule yesterday, the president's office said, following anti-government demonstrations by supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and armed violence in the northwest.

Thousands of Khan's supporters have been marching in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to demand his release and airing anti-government criticism fuelled by harsh economic conditions.

Shortly after the measures were announced, a lawmaker from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, Junaid Akbar, said on X that the province's chief minister Sohail Afridi had been arrested along with the provincial president.

A government spokesperson did not immediately respond to request for comment on the PTI provincial leader detentions. The country's law minister confirmed the provincial government had been disbanded, saying at a news conference that incidents of militancy had increased during its tenure.

PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan called the emergency declaration "an extremely alarming and grave political mistake and an undemocratic measure".

"The people will never accept such actions against their rights," he posted on X.

The declaration, invoked under two articles of Pakistan's constitution dealing with security, grants the federal government sweeping administrative powers over the province.

President Asif Ali Zardari signed the order after cabinet recommendations "regarding the law and order situation, and the failure of negotiations with government delegations", his office said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's office said earlier the decision had been taken over the "deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and... from the provincial government's deliberate indifference in the war against terrorism".



People travel along a road blocked with shipping containers amid ongoing protests by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party demanding the release of jailed former PM Imran Khan in Peshawar yesterday. (AFP)

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a stronghold for Khan's party, and the PTI-led government there will be sidelined under yesterday's extraordinary constitutional measures.

At a later news conference, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar confirmed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's provincial government would be "non-functional until the situation improves", outlining arrangements for the province to be administered directly by its governor, assisted by an advisory council.

Intense security was deployed in the provincial capital of Peshawar yesterday, with large numbers of personnel around the chief minister's residence, an AFP reporter said, while mobile phone networks in the area appeared to be disrupted.

Public transport services were suspended and roads in other cities in the province also had been closed.

"All the roads are blocked. We have a democratic government here, with members of the provin-

cial and national assemblies being held hostage," Abdur Rehman, 32, told AFP in Peshawar.

"If they impose an emergency, it would amount to stealing the mandate of our Pashtun people. This should not happen," he added, referring to the ethnicity of the majority of the population in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PTI supporters began "long march" demonstrations, led by the province's chief minister, between towns and cities throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a week ago with plans to eventually reach the Pakistani capital, as talks with the government broke down.

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

He and his legal team reject the allegations, branding them as politically motivated.

Once backed by the country's powerful military establishment during his rise to power, Khan fell out over key appointments and foreign policy issues before being ousted in a parliamentary vote of no confidence in 2022.

He has publicly accused the military leadership, including Army Chief General Asim Munir, of orchestrating his removal. The military denies meddling in politics.

Facing the threat of civil unrest in recent weeks, the government had sought to avert the opposition party's show of force on the streets through talks with its leaders, tying negotiations over PTI's demands to agreement on ramped up security measures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The protesters' demands included access to Khan by his doctors. Talks broke down on October 4, prompting the start of the demonstrations.

In a separate security challenge, Pakistan has blamed an increase in attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the southern border province of Balochistan on militancy emanating from Afghanistan.

The Taliban government in Kabul denies such claims and criticises Pakistan for violating Afghanistan's sovereignty and killing civilians in strikes Islamabad says target militants.

The accusations have sparked a bitter rift and armed conflict between the neighbouring countries this year.

Drone hits Yandex in third reported attack

A drone has damaged another data centre belonging to Russian technology giant Yandex, the company said early yesterday, in the third reported attack on the firm in days.

Users told AFP that several Yandex apps had stopped working, among them the company's ride-sharing and payment apps.

Yandex, often dubbed "Russia's Google", runs the country's most popular search engine, as well as food-ordering and taxi apps used by tens of millions of people. The attack, the third reported within a week, could signal the start of a new retaliatory campaign from Ukraine targeting Russia's Internet infrastructure — weeks after Moscow started hitting data centres in Ukraine.

"As a result of a UAV attack, infrastructure at the Yandex data centre in Vladimir was damaged," the company said in a service alert on Telegram. The Vladimir region is east of Moscow.

No one was injured in the attack, Yandex said, adding that emergency services were at the site and the company was evaluating ways to restore operations. (AFP)

Suspect held in alleged assassination bid on Polish PM, defence minister

AFP
Warsaw

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said yesterday a man accused of plotting an assassination attack against him and defence minister had been detained, following an earlier announcement of suspected threats from the interior ministry.

"The man threatening an attack has been detained," Tusk wrote on X, praising the police for their "swift and decisive action".

The arrest was also confirmed on X by Polish Interior Minister Marcin Kierwinski.

Earlier, the interior ministry said Tusk and Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz may have been targeted by assassination attempts.

A "report about a possible assassination attempt on Prime Minister Donald Tusk, as well as on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, was transmitted to the police



Prime Minister Donald Tusk is pictured during the signing of agreements between Poland and France at the Main Town Hall in Gdansk. (AFP/File Photo)

via the State Protection Service (SOP)", interior ministry spokeswoman Karolina Galecka said at a press briefing.

Earlier yesterday, the ministry ordered authorities to take action "in connection with the information received by (the police) con-

cerning a possible assassination attempt on the prime minister... as well as the deputy prime minister", who is also defence minister, Galecka wrote on X.

Members of the police, state protection service (SOP) and internal security agency were present at the meeting yesterday.

"We are treating this matter as deadly serious," a spokesperson for the minister-co-ordinator of special services, Jacek Dobrzynski, told journalists afterwards.

"Month by month, year by year, more and more various threats and menacing messages reach the police, SOP, and the services concerning Poland and Poles," he said, adding that "in this case we are talking about a strong likelihood that these threats could actually be carried out".

Poland, a Nato and EU member country, has been on high alert following multiple stabbing attacks in the last week, which Tusk on Thursday denounced as a "cult of violence".

Tens of thousands urge climate action at Brussels demo

AFP
Brussels

Tens of thousands of people marched yesterday through the Belgian capital Brussels to the EU's headquarters to demand greater action to combat climate change ahead of a major UN summit.

Record heatwaves across Europe in recent months have raised concerns about the impact that man-made climate change is having on the continent.

Delegates from around the globe will gather in the Turkish resort town of Antalya next month for the annual COP gathering.

But expectations are low that the meeting will yield any major breakthroughs as the US under Donald Trump has disengaged from the process and momentum is waning in Europe.

"There is a great deal of concern



Protesters take part in the Climate March 2026, organised by the Climate Coalition, in Brussels, yesterday. (AFP)

among the population, not just among the protesters today," economist Etienne de Callatay told AFP, as he attended the march.

"The extreme heat we experienced this summer is something everyone was aware of. Politicians

shouldn't be afraid of electoral repercussions if they take courageous measures on environmental issues."

Aurore Schreiber, who works for a development cooperation NGO, said she had attended with her family "so that politicians wake up

and hear the citizens' message". "We need to listen to the demands of young people and the most vulnerable," she said. "We need greener, fairer supply chains that take into account workers' issues and wages."

Police put the number of participants at the march — the latest in a series to be held in Brussels — at 45,000.

After having its hopes dashed for a more ambitious deal last year in Brazil, the European Union is setting its sights low for next month's COP31.

With climate sceptic Trump withdrawing the US from the negotiations, international efforts to combat global warming had already taken a battering.

Now the situation looks even less promising. Surging energy prices have put major oil and gas producers in a position of strength that makes them less likely to want to discuss phasing out fossil fuels.

Pope to be operated on for lump on lung

AFP
Vatican City

Pope Leo XIV yesterday announced he would have an operation "in the coming days" for a lump on his lung, saying it had been located "at a very early stage".

"During recent medical checks, a nodule on my lung was found. It has been detected at a very early stage and is very localised," the 71-year-old said in a weekly address in St Peter's Square.

"The doctors believe it would be right to intervene and so, following their advice, I have decided to have the operation to remove it. The operation is already planned in the coming days," he said.

Following the Pope's statement during his Angelus prayers, the Vatican press office said the

pontiff was expected to have surgery in the next few days, and the expected recovery time from the operation would be around one week.

The operation was to take place in the Gemelli hospital in Rome, which has frequently treated popes since John Paul II.

No information has been given as to whether the surgery and recovery would affect the Pope's agenda for international trips. He is next due to go to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru between November 6 and 17.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said in a statement that the "calmness with which he spoke during today's Angelus reassures us".

She expressed to the Pope her "personal closeness, and that of the Italian government, as he confronts this ordeal of the coming days".



LuLu, QCS join hands for breast cancer awareness campaign

LuLu Hypermarket has partnered with the Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) to support the 'It's Time' breast cancer awareness campaign, reinforcing the importance of early detection, regular screening and greater public awareness during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

As part of the collaboration, LuLu Hypermarket has launched its signature 'Shop and Donate' campaign across all its stores in Qatar. Throughout October, LuLu will donate a portion of sales proceeds from more than 1,500 selected products to QCS to support its cancer awareness, education, and outreach programmes.

The campaign encourages customers to make a difference through everyday shopping while helping spread a vital message: when it comes to breast cancer, early detection matters, and acting at the right time can make a difference.

Demonstrating its support for the campaign, LuLu Hypermarket



stores across Qatar are displaying the 'Shop and Donate' campaign branding to raise awareness and show solidarity with those affected by breast cancer. Through this in-store initiative, LuLu aims to engage customers, promote breast health awareness and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

A spokesperson for the Qatar Cancer Society expressed appreciation for LuLu Hypermarket's continued support, saying: "LuLu

Hypermarket has consistently stood alongside the Qatar Cancer Society in our shared mission to promote cancer awareness and encourage early detection. Its continued support for initiatives such as 'It's Time' reflects a genuine commitment to community well-being.

Together, we aim to empower individuals with knowledge, support those affected by cancer and encourage more people to take

proactive steps towards their health."

A LuLu Hypermarket spokesperson added: "At LuLu, we believe that meaningful change begins with awareness and collective action. Through our 'Shop and Donate' campaign, we are giving customers an opportunity to support an important cause through their everyday purchases. Our partnership with the Qatar Cancer Society reflects our commitment to the community and our belief that supporting cancer awareness and those affected by the disease is a shared responsibility."

The initiative forms part of LuLu Hypermarket's ongoing corporate social responsibility efforts and aligns with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly its emphasis on building a healthy and sustainable society.

By bringing the campaign directly to its stores, LuLu aims to engage customers and employees



in a collective effort to promote awareness, encourage early detection and support those affected by breast cancer.

Throughout October, customers across Qatar can participate by shopping for the featured products at LuLu Hypermarket stores, with a portion of the proceeds supporting QCS programmes.

Through this partnership, LuLu Hypermarket and the Qatar Cancer Society are calling on the community to recognise the importance of health, act early and stand together in support of everyone affected by breast cancer. When it comes to awareness and early detection, it's time to act.



Camping shops gear up for winter season as demand rises

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Camping equipment shops nationwide are ramping up ahead of the winter camping season, expanding inventories and introducing a wider range of products to meet growing demand from families, young people, and outdoor enthusiasts looking to enjoy the cooler months.

Retailers are stocking up on tents, imported fabrics, ropes, lighting and power equipment, outdoor furniture, cooking appliances and cooling systems, along with modern products designed to enhance comfort, safety and convenience at campsites.

Shop owners and workers said preparations begin well before the season, with businesses importing extra supplies of popular products and diversifying their offerings to suit different budgets and preferences. They noted that customers increasingly prioritise quality, durability, and weather resistance when choosing camping equipment.

Demand is also growing for innovative solutions, particularly solar-powered products and waterproof materials, as campers seek more practical and environmentally friendly options. At the same time, traditional camping essentials continue to account for a significant share of sales.

Zakaria Ali, an employee at a camping supplies shop, said retailers have been working to secure enough popular fabrics, particularly Pakistani and Indian varieties.

He said tent prices generally range from QR1,300 for smaller models to QR3,500 for larger ones, depending on factors such as fabric thickness, weight and embroidery. Waterproof fabrics are attracting growing interest because they offer extra protection on outdoor trips. Some shops also offer on-site inspection and measurement services to ensure tents meet customers' specific requirements.

Ali added that ropes remain essential to camping preparations, with cotton and silk varieties available in different sizes, including options up to 30 millimetres in diameter.

Maarouf Sayed, a tent-making craftsman, said shops have prepared substantial quantities of fabrics in various designs and specifications, offering both ready-made and custom-made tents.

According to Sayed, tent prices generally range from QR1,500 to QR2,500, with delivery times varying from five days to two weeks depending on the order and requirements. Pakistani fabric remains the most popular choice, with prices starting at QR220 per metre, followed by Indian fabric at QR190 per metre. He said prices had remained broadly stable compared with the previous camping season.

Additional supplies are also available to help campers set up their sites. Cotton and silk rope bundles cost between QR150 and QR350, while metal fasteners cost around QR5 each. Transport trolleys start at QR150, and water hoses cost QR150 to QR250.

Mohamed Arshad, a camping equipment trader, said shops have stocked a wide selection of imported fabrics from Pakistan, India, and Republic of Korea. The range includes lightweight and heavy-duty materials, embroidered fabrics and waterproof options to suit different camping needs.

Arshad said cotton ropes are priced between QR30 and QR50, depending on size, while nylon ropes cost between QR20 and QR35. Durable equipment-carrying bags start at QR20, while metal transport trolleys range from QR160 to QR270.

He also noted the growing popularity of solar-powered equipment, which provides an alternative energy source for campsites and can help reduce reliance on conventional power supplies. Such products increasingly appeal to campers seeking practical, energy-efficient solutions.

Retailers said some imported fabrics and camping products had become slightly more expensive because international shipping and delivery costs have risen. However, Arshad said prices could decline modestly as the season progresses, depending on supply levels, product availability and the movement of remaining stock.

breast cancer treatment outcomes and survival rates.

Mona Ashkanani, director general of QCS, said raising awareness of risk factors, understanding what normal breast appearance and feel are, and recognising unusual changes are essential steps in combating the disease. She urged women not to delay seeking medical advice if they notice any changes,

stressing that timely diagnosis can significantly improve the chances of successful treatment.

Breast cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women worldwide, accounting for about one in six cancer-related deaths among females and around 25% of all cancer cases diagnosed in women each year, according to figures cited by the society.



From left: Sultan al-Sharshani, Mohammed Sadok al-Amari, QPC Director, Dr Saleh al-Mutairi, Salah al-Atibi, Jassim Fkhro

and intellectual production.

He cautioned against reducing Gulf identity to oil wealth, arguing that such perceptions overlook the region's human, cultural and civilisational contributions. While the Gulf Co-operation Council states share common interests and historical bonds, their diverse experiences and achievements deserve greater recognition.

Despite the expansion of Gulf media and cultural platforms, he questioned whether they had succeeded in changing deeply rooted perceptions that portray the region merely as a desert transformed into modern cities, without acknowledging the people, knowledge and efforts behind this development.

On the relationship between Gulf societies and Arab intellectuals, al-Mutairi noted that the region had attracted writers, researchers, and scholars through its universities, cultural institutions,

and media organisations.

However, he emphasised that intellectual engagement should go beyond participation in cultural events to include meaningful contributions to public debate and knowledge production. Intellectuals, he said, should critically examine the Gulf's transformations and help integrate its ideas and experiences into broader Arab cultural discourse.

He also highlighted Arab talent's contribution to the region's development, describing this interaction as an important dimension of Arab co-operation.

Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup provided a practical example of the region's capacity to organise a major international event and bring together people from diverse cultural backgrounds, challenging preconceived notions through direct engagement.

Al-Mutairi also cited Kuwait-based Al-Arabi magazine for in-

roducing readers to Arab societies and cultures through in-depth reports and features.

Discussing the changing landscape of Arab cultural influence, he said the growing prominence of Gulf institutions reflected the emergence of multiple centres of knowledge and creativity. Universities in Qatar, which attract students and researchers from different countries, illustrate how international diversity can encourage intellectual exchange and strengthen scientific and cultural engagement.

He rejected the notion that financial resources alone explained the Gulf's growing influence, stressing the importance of strong institutions, skilled professionals and initiatives that deliver genuine intellectual and cultural value.

Turning to media, al-Mutairi argued that owning media platforms was not enough to shape public perceptions. Success required a coherent narrative that communicated the Gulf's history, achievements, and transformations in ways that resonated with audiences.

He cited Al Jazeera's international reach as an example of how media institutions can influence public awareness and shape narratives, while highlighting Al Kass channels' specialised sports coverage as evidence of the importance of professional excellence in strengthening the region's media presence.

From childhood nostalgia to valuable assets: Qatar's trading card scene grows

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Trading cards are moving beyond childhood nostalgia and becoming a growing collectables market in Qatar, with CardzCon 2026 attracting more than 5,000 visitors and over 70 vendors at its first edition.

Held on October 9 and 10 at Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel, the two-day convention brought together collectors, traders, vendors, and enthusiasts from Qatar, the GCC, and international markets, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Hong Kong.

Organised by Art of Cardz and supported by Qatar Calendar, powered by Visit Qatar, the event featured trading card game (TCG) cards, graded cards, sealed products, sports cards, collectible figures and rare finds. Visitors also joined live pack openings and interactive activities, as well as buying, selling, and trading.



Abdulrahman Totonji

Abdulrahman Totonji, founder of Art of Cardz and managing partner of SHIFT Group, said the convention was created to fill a market gap as collectors sought ways to connect beyond online purchases.

"Collectors weren't just looking for a shop to buy packs; they wanted a real community space to trade, learn, showcase rare finds, and connect with people who share the same passion," he said.

Totonji said the business had grown from small community meet-ups in Doha to cross-border events, including its Riyadh Trade Night, with CardzCon emerging as a platform for the region's expanding collecting community.

Ashkanani said the figures underscore the importance of sustained public awareness, prevention and access to appropriate screening and medical services.

As part of the global Breast Cancer Awareness Month campaign, known as Pink October, QCS has launched its "Ja Al-waqt" campaign to encourage early detection, promote health-

ier lifestyles and extend awareness messages to different segments of society.

The campaign's name, which conveys the message that "the time has come," encourages women to prioritise their health and undergo appropriate examinations. It also highlights the importance of supporting women living with breast cancer and

those who have recovered from the disease.

Ashkanani said the society designed this year's campaign to reach the public in different settings, reflecting its belief that breast cancer awareness is a shared social responsibility. She stressed that awareness efforts should continue throughout the year rather than being confined to October.

QCS urges women to prioritise early breast cancer detection

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has urged women to prioritise breast health, recognise potential warning signs and seek timely medical advice, stressing that early detection remains one of the most effective ways to improve