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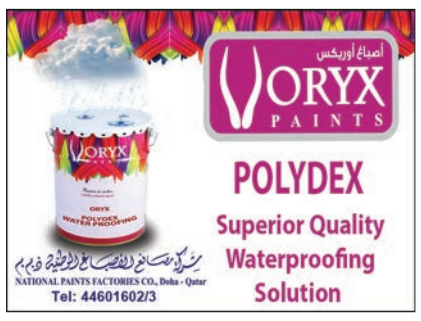
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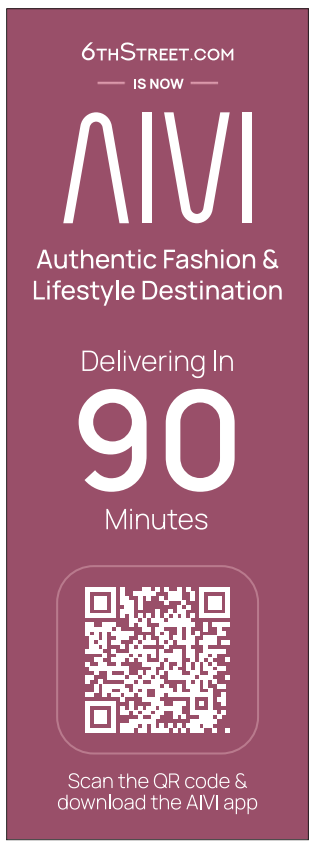
BUSINESS | Page 1

QFC welcomes UAE-based investment firm Shorooq to Qatar









Qatar condemns shooting in Poland

Qatar has expressed its condemnation and denunciation of a shooting incident in the city of Krakow, in southern Poland, which resulted in deaths and injuries. In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Qatar's firm position rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, regardless of their motives or causes. (**QNA**)

Qatar, Saudi Arabia discuss regional developments

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani held a telephone conversation with Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah al-Saud to discuss bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and expand co-operation.

The two sides also reviewed the latest regional developments, particularly ongoing diplomatic efforts and joint co-ordination aimed at de-escalating tensions and enhancing security and stability across the region.

HE the Prime Minister reaffirmed Qatar's support for all diplomatic efforts and initiatives aimed at reaching a solution that guarantees freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement to achieve lasting peace in the region.

The discussions come against the backdrop of Qatar's sustained diplomatic engagement over the past eight months, during which Doha has continued to pursue mediation and dialogue as essential instruments for resolving regional tensions and preventing further escalation. (**QNA**)

Qatar a model for investing in culture: Unesco official

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar's sustained investment in culture and the creative industries has made it a model for other countries to emulate, a senior United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) official has said, adding that the country is already reaping the economic rewards.

In an exclusive interview with *Gulf Times*, Nayef al-Fayez, Unesco's assistant director-general for culture, said the investment had opened up a wealth of economic and creative opportunities, both in the region and further afield.

"Qatar has been focusing on investment in culture and the creative industries for some time. Qatar has taken the lead in such initiatives, and it is evident when we look at the country's art and cultural landscape," he said.

"Qatar is already reaping the benefits of what it has invested. It is great to see such initiatives contribute to the country's economy in a big way. We are seeing this in the country, and it is visible to audiences around the world." To Page 7

Mediation worth pursuing even if it takes a year: PM



Qatar will keep mediating with all parties to spare the region another round of escalation, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani said, insisting that dialogue is the path to lasting security for all.

Speaking at the Oxford Union in the United Kingdom, in a lecture titled "Thriving in a Fractured World: Small States and the New Geography of Global Impact", HE the Prime Minister argued that small states with strong economic foundations are directly exposed to global instability, and that this gives them a duty to act. To Page 7



محمد بن عبدالرحمن
@MBA_AlThani_

I affirmed today at the Oxford Union that countries that have been able to turn their potential into sources of strength and prosperity are also capable of playing a greater role in making peace and promoting global stability, and that a country's size is no longer a measure of its influence on the international stage amid the growing challenges and divisions in our world

'Prosperous states' urged to shape global peace

Qatar and other economically prosperous small states can make a significant contribution to global stability, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani has said, calling for them to play a larger role in shaping international peace and security.

Speaking at the Oxford Union in Oxford, England, yesterday, HE Sheikh Mohammed delivered a lecture titled "Prosperity in a Divided World: Small States and Redrawing the Map of Global Influence." He highlighted the growing importance of smaller but prosperous nations in an increasingly divided international landscape.

Countries that had prospered and become essential to global economic development, he said, were uniquely placed to promote peace, not through individual initiatives but through a collective, organised and sustained approach. To Page 7

Monoprix Qatar and Ministry of Commerce Celebrate National Product Week with Special Ceremony

Monoprix Qatar, a subsidiary of Ali Bin Ali Holding, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, marked Qatar's National Product Week under the theme "From the Land of Qatar, the Story Began" with a special ceremony held on Thursday, November 5, 2026, at its Place Vendôme store.

The event celebrated the quality and diversity of locally made Qatari products, reaffirming Monoprix Qatar's commitment to supporting local producers and providing a platform for homegrown businesses to reach a wider audience. The celebration will continue across Monoprix Qatar stores until

November 12, 2026, offering customers the opportunity to discover and support a diverse selection of locally made products.

The ceremony brought together representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, alongside members of the Monoprix Qatar team, including Mr. Sébastien Farhat, COO, Consumer & Hi-Tech Retail at Ali Bin Ali Holding, Mr. Chadi Bou Antoun, Country Manager of Monoprix Qatar, as well as store managers and employees.

As part of the celebration, attendees explored the dedicated displays showcasing a selection of Qatari-made products, highlighting the variety and quality of local offerings available to customers.

All Monoprix stores across Qatar have been specially branded for the celebration, featuring dedicated Qatari product displays, eye-catching danglers, gondolas, and informative store screen content.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Sébastien Farhat, COO, Consumer & Hi-Tech Retail at Ali Bin Ali Holding, said: "Supporting local producers is an important part of our commitment to the communities we serve. Through







National Product Week, we are proud to celebrate the talent, quality and ambition behind Qatari-made products, while giving local businesses greater visibility and opportunities to connect with consumers. We remain committed to contributing to the growth of Qatar's local economy and championing homegrown products."

As part of National Product Week, Monoprix Qatar is proud to be part of this initiative led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, supporting its efforts to promote local producers and showcase the quality and diversity of Qatari-made products.





QATAR

Qatar's exit from NIAP marks global recognition of its efforts

The State of Qatar has secured international recognition for its substantial progress in combating illegal ivory trade, with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Standing Committee deciding to end the State of Qatar's participation in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process after the country implemented 93% of the measures in its national plan.

Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), Dr Ibrahim Abdul Latif al-Maslamani, said the move followed a positive assessment by the CITES Secretariat, which recommended ending the State of Qatar's participation in the process.

He explained to Qatar News Agency that the achievement was an outgrowth of joint national action and constant co-ordination among the relevant entities, culminating in commendation during a Standing Committee meeting.

The assessment also showed a decline of more than 99% in the quantities of illegal ivory seized in other countries and linked to shipments that had transited through the State of Qatar, compared with the eight years preceding the launch of the national plan in 2018.

This suggests a quite substantial improvement in the indicator associated with the exploitation of international transit routes for illegal ivory trade.

Dr al-Maslamani said the move grew out of a comprehensive package of measures, rather than a single action, comprising 15 priority measures. These included developing monitoring procedures, strengthening inspection and law enforcement, fostering the efficiency of national personnel, improving information interchange and managing the government's ivory stockpile.

He stressed that this decline represents an incentive to continue developing the measures and enhancing their effectiveness, rather than a justification for easing oversight.

Dr al-Maslamani further pointed out that combating illegal ivory trade requires integrating the roles of MoECC and the participating national entities, linking environmental expertise with customs and security operations, as well as transport and border-crossing procedures. This integrated approach is intended to ensure combined efforts and achieve a common goal, he continued.



Dr Ibrahim Abdul Latif al-Maslamani

Dr al-Maslamani pointed out that combating illegal ivory trade requires integrating the roles of MoECC and the participating national entities, linking environmental expertise with customs and security operations, as well as transport and border-crossing procedures

Regarding enforcement, he explained that the appropriate authorities at border crossings, together with environmental and security agencies, operate through monitoring, inspection and verification of documents and permits required according to the type of shipment and the provisions of the Convention. Violations are dealt with and referred to the constituted authorities.

He also highlighted that the responsibilities of the Wildlife Development Department include approving permits for the import, export, transport and transit of endangered wildlife species and their products, in lockstep with the appropriate authorities, as well as detecting violations of permit conditions and referring them to the appropriate authorities.

The Assistant Undersecretary said MoECC is focusing during the coming phase on building on what has been achieved, developing national capabilities, maintaining co-ordination and exchanging information, while monitoring the effectiveness of oversight measures and bringing them into line with the latest developments.

Down the road, continued institutional co-ordination and updated procedures will remain important to sustaining the progress, he highlighted.

Dr al-Maslamani maintained that accomplishing the national plan doesn't suggest that the responsibility is over. Rather, it marks a transition to continued work within a sustainable institutional framework, as the State of Qatar continues to meet its obligations under the CITES Convention and strengthen co-operation with international partners to protect endangered species.

In a related context, Dr al-Maslamani underscored that the State of Qatar's efforts aren't confined to combating illegal ivory trade. They also encompass regulating international trade in endangered wildlife species and their products through permits and oversight of import, export, transport and transit operations, as well as detecting violations and referring them to the competent authorities.

Dr al-Maslamani reported that the ministry is working to facilitate access to CITES permits through online services while scrupulously adhering to the regulations governing them. It has also established a specialised office at Souq Waqif Falcon Hospital to issue the relevant import and export permits. The objective, he outlined, is to facilitate legitimate and regulated transactions and prevent illegal trade that threatens the survival of wildlife species.

Addressing the challenges encountered in implementing the national plan, Dr al-Maslamani said the foremost included the multiplicity of entities involved and the need to ensure that their roles were integrated and that information continued to be exchanged among them. Other challenges included developing technical capabilities and documenting progress in a clear and measurable manner.

Dr al-Maslamani suggested that the achievement reflects the State of Qatar's approach to wildlife protection as a shared national and international responsibility. He stressed that fulfilling international obligations requires practical measures and constant co-operation among the appropriate authorities.

The recognition accorded to the State of Qatar's efforts during the CITES Standing Committee meetings, he said, underscores the paramount importance of co-operation, information interchange and forging partnerships to achieve enduring results, into line with the environmental sustainability goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Dr al-Maslamani expressed pride in this national accomplishment and gratitude to all participating entities and work teams whose efforts and commitment had been instrumental in achieving it.

As such, Dr al-Maslamani called on community members, travellers and those involved in trading wildlife species and their products to scrupulously verify the legality of anything they purchase or transport and ensure that all required permits are obtained before travelling or shipping. (**QNA**)

Palau president arrives in Doha



The President of the Republic of Palau Surangel Whipps arrived in Doha yesterday for a working visit to the State of Qatar. The president and his accompanying delegation were welcomed at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, the Director of Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim bin Yousuf Fakhro, and the ambassador of Australia to the State of Qatar Shane Flanagan. (**QNA**)

QNA joins initiative to promote AI standards in journalism



Qatar News Agency (QNA) has joined a global media initiative aimed at jointly developing standards for artificial intelligence (AI) applications in journalism, becoming one of its founding partners during the opening of the seventh World Media Summit in Beijing.

The State of Qatar was represented at the summit by HE QNA Director-General Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi.

The summit was officially opened by Li Shulei, member of the Political Bureau and head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, in the presence of heads and representatives of news agencies and media organisations from around the world, as well as officials, experts and academics.

Hosted by China's Xinhua News Agency, the initiative seeks to strengthen international co-operation on the responsible use of AI in journalism through shared standards, the exchange of expertise and best practices, joint verification, collaborative research and capacity-building programmes.

It aims to enable participating media organisations to draw on their respective capabilities and experience while contributing to the development of common approaches to the use of emerging technologies in news production.

The initiative also introduced a Global Media Co-operation Framework, serving as a voluntary reference for international media organisations seeking to adopt responsible AI practices. It is based on multilateral co-operation and allows participating institutions to contribute to its ongoing development and updating.

QNA joined a group of founding partners that includes Russia's TASS news agency, Vietnam News Agency, Russia's Rossiyskaya Gazeta, the Union of OIC News Agencies, South Africa's Independent Online, teleSUR (La Nueva Television del Sur C.A.), Malaysia's national news agency Bernama, Peru's Andina news agency, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation and Tunis Afrique Presse Agency, alongside several Chinese media organisations.

The 7th World Media Summit, organised by Xinhua in co-operation with the Beijing Municipal Government from November 5-9, is discussing the future of the media industry amid rapid advances in artificial intelligence.

Its agenda also focuses on strengthening international co-operation and exchanging expertise in digital media and technological innovation. (**QNA**)

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LuLu Hypermarket, MoCI launch Qatari products at National Product Week 2026

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter





LuLu Hypermarket Qatar, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), launched National Product Week 2026 under the slogan 'From Us, For Us – The Story Begins in Qatar' with a special event at LuLu Gharrafa Hypermarket.

The campaign aims to encourage consumers to choose locally made products, strengthen the presence of Qatari brands in the retail market and contribute to economic diversification. Taking place across all LuLu Hypermarket stores in Qatar, the initiative provides a prominent platform to showcase the quality, diversity and potential of homegrown products.

The campaign was officially inaugurated by Dr Mohamed Ahmed Albohashim al-Sayed, director of the National Product Competitiveness Department, and Jassim al-Kuwari, assistant director, National Product Competitiveness Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in the presence of Shaijan, director of LuLu Hypermarket Qatar, Shanavas, regional director of LuLu Hypermarket Qatar, Qatari guests, ministry representatives and senior LuLu management.

Al-Kuwari, told *Gulf Times* that the initiative is part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's efforts in collaboration with private-sector partners.

He said: "Last year, we achieved a 75% increase in Qatari product sales during National Product Week at one of the hypermarkets, and this year, we aim to achieve even more. The National Product Week aims at supporting national products, national farmers as well, and national manufacturers."

"Our main goal is to promote the national products so that customers or all people living in Qatar know that we have good quality national products, and this will secure our goal of reaching more sales of national products and for the food security of the country," he added.

Running until November 15, the campaign celebrates Qatar's growing production capabilities, rich heritage and entrepreneurial spirit while creating greater opportunities for local manufacturers and suppliers to connect with consumers. It also highlights the important role of locally produced goods in strengthening the national economy and promoting a sustainable domestic business ecosystem.

Customers visiting LuLu Hypermarket stores can explore an extensive range of Qatari-made products across multiple categories, including fresh vegetables, herbs, chicken, eggs, Arabic lamb, dairy products, frozen foods, delicatessen, bakery items, groceries, and health and beauty products.

Further reinforcing its commitment to local sourcing and manufacturing, LuLu also showcases more than 300 private-label products manufactured in Qatar, demonstrating its continued efforts to support domestic industries and expand opportunities for local production.

The campaign brings together an impressive portfolio of leading Qatari brands at LuLu hypermarkets, including Baladna, Pearla, Mazzaraty, Dandy, Al Maha, Qbake, Rawa, QFM, Rayyan, Qatar Pafki, Jawharah, Flora, Gourmet, Agrico Qatar, Batatos, Al Wajba, Kitco, Paramount Agricole, Ocean Fish, Napoli Bakeries, Al Waha, Al Annabi, Korean Bakeries, Al Manhal, Aqua Gulf and Doha, among others.

Adding further excitement to the campaign, LuLu Hypermarket has introduced the 'Shop & Win' promotion, running until December 5, 2026, to reward customers for supporting Qatari products. Under this initiative, customers purchasing Qatari products worth QR25 or more from the supermarket section will receive an electronic raffle coupon, giving them an opportunity to win LuLu gift vouchers.

The campaign will feature 20 winners, each receiving a LuLu gift voucher worth QR5,000, bringing the total prize value to QR100,000. The lucky draw is scheduled to take place on December 17 at LuLu Hypermarket, D-Ring Road.

Assets Group and Azimut Yachts strengthen strategic partnership

New agreement positions Azimut Yachts as Preferred Luxury Yacht Partner for Assets Group's future hospitality developments, with plans to explore bespoke yacht concepts for landmark destinations, including Atlantis the Royal, Maldives.





Assets Group, a subsidiary of Power International Holding and a global destination developer, and Azimut Yachts, a leading name in luxury yacht design and manufacturing, have announced the expansion of their strategic collaboration through a new agreement positioning Azimut Yachts as the Preferred Luxury Yacht Partner for Assets Group's future hospitality developments worldwide.

Announced during the Qatar Boat Show 2026, the agreement marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the two companies, bringing together Assets Group's vision for creating distinctive international hospitality destinations with Azimut's expertise in luxury yachting, innovation and bespoke design.

Building on the partnership announced in September 2026, which included the purchase of 18 Azimut luxury yachts by Assets Group, valued more than QAR 250 million, to serve Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi and Rosewood Ranfaru Maldives, supported by a dedicated Azimut Service Center in the Maldives, opened in collaboration with Azimut Yachts Gulf and Maldives powered by Elite Yachts, this expanded partnership establishes a framework for exploring opportunities across Assets Group's growing international portfolio.

At the heart of the expanded partnership is a shared ambition to redefine the role of luxury yachting within the hospitality experience, transforming yachts from a standalone transportation or leisure offering into an integral part of the destination experience.

Beyond the provision of luxury yachts, the two companies intend to explore the development of bespoke yacht concepts tailored to the identity, architectural character and guest experience aspirations of individual resorts and destinations.

Under the proposed collaboration, Azimut's Research & Development, Technical and Design teams would work alongside Assets Group during the early development stages of selected projects, exploring opportunities to integrate customized yacht solutions into the overall destination planning and design process.

These concepts could encompass tailored exterior and interior designs, materials, layouts, onboard technologies and personalized guest experiences, creating distinctive marine offerings that complement each destination's positioning and character.

The collaboration will also explore opportunities across Assets Group's pipeline of upcoming hospitality developments, including Atlantis The Royal, Maldives, a landmark luxury destination being developed in partnership with Kerzner International. The project presents an opportunity to explore bespoke yacht concepts that complement the resort's distinctive positioning, creating personalized marine experiences that extend the guest journey beyond the shores of the destination.

The expanded collaboration reflects Assets Group's commitment to partnering with internationally recognized luxury brands to enhance the appeal, differentiation and long-term value of its hospitality destinations.

"Our partnership with Azimut Yachts reflects our vision to create exceptional hospitality destinations through innovation and personalized luxury experiences. By exploring bespoke yacht concepts for future developments, including Atlantis The Royal, Maldives, we aim to elevate the guest experience and set new benchmarks in luxury hospitality." Commented Mr. Khaled Zi Alnon, Group Chief Executive Officer of Assets Group

For Azimut Yachts, the agreement presents an opportunity to extend its design and technical expertise into a broader hospitality context, exploring new approaches to yacht customization and integration within internationally developed luxury destinations.

"We are extremely proud that, immediately following the delivery of our first yachts in the Maldives, this collaboration is already taking its next concrete step. It is a clear testament to the quality of Azimut's work and our ability to provide dedicated local support through our new Service Center, which proved to be a decisive factor." Commented Mr. Marco Valle, Chief Executive Officer of Azimut|Benetti Group.

By combining Assets Group's expertise in destination development with Azimut's capabilities in naval architecture, design, technology and customization, the partnership aims to create a framework for future collaboration that brings together innovation, craftsmanship and destination-led hospitality.

The agreement highlights both companies' shared ambition to explore new standards of personalized luxury experiences, strengthening the connection between exceptional hospitality destinations and the world of luxury yachting.



QATAR

Ooredoo Group brings digital infrastructure to life at MWC



Ooredoo Group is returning to MWC Doha as Strategic Operator Partner, inviting visitors to its Booth B40 until November 10 to explore how the group brings together connectivity, data centres and AI compute to support businesses across its markets.

Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group CEO, Ooredoo, said: "MWC Doha brings global telecom and technology leaders to Qatar and gives us a stage to show how businesses can put our digital infrastructure and the services it enables to work. We look forward to welcoming visitors to our booth to see our live demonstrations and meet the teams behind them."

Fakhroo will join 'Mobile: Powering Progress', the industry panel at the Digital Leadership Forum today (November 8) from 10.20am-11.20am. The discussion will cover investment in resilient networks, the integration of terrestrial and satellite connectivity, and digital inclusion.

Doha Design District invites designers to showcase their work through Mada

Doha Design District, powered by Msheireb Properties, has invited designers and creative entrepreneurs across Qatar to participate in an Open Call to showcase their original designs through Mada, the curated retail space supporting local creativity and the creative economy.
Eligible categories include home accessories and objects, ceramics, textiles, jewellery, stationery, sustainable design and other contemporary design products, provided they demonstrate originality and quality.
Director of Doha Design District, Dana Kazic, stated that the initiative gives designers a space to showcase their work and connect with a wider audience that can appreciate their ideas and skills.
She noted the District's commitment to encouraging innovation and giving designers an opportunity to show what their creativity can bring to the development of products related to everyday life. (**QNA**)

almeera celebrates National Product Week, reinforcing commitment to local businesses



Al Meera Consumer Goods Company, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has launched its National Product Week campaign, "The Story Began on Qatar's Soil", running from November 5-12.

Under the slogan "From Us, For Us", the campaign celebrates the quality and diversity of Qatari products and their contribution to the national economy. It also reflects almeera's longstanding commitment to supporting local businesses, manufacturers, farmers and entrepreneurs.

almeera works with 200 local companies, with annual transactions reaching QR700mn. Local products account for 25% of almeera's total sales. Across its stores, almeera offers more than 8,732 locally produced products from 182 local suppliers across 12 product categories.

In its fast-moving consumer goods range, almeera works with 118 Qatari suppliers and offers 194 local brands and 3,645 locally manufactured products. Its local assortment also includes fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy products and cheese, meat and poultry, baked goods and non-food products.

These partnerships form part of almeera's wider network of approximately 750 suppliers, with sourcing spanning more than 100 countries. Through its nationwide store network, almeera helps local producers expand their distribution and reach more customers.

The National Product Week campaign was launched at almeera's Ain Khaled branch. Attending from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry were Hassan Sultan al-Ghanim, assistant undersecretary for Consumer Affairs, Dr Mohammed al-Sayed, director of the National Product Competitiveness Support Department, and Jassim al-Kuwari, assistant director of the department, along with other Ministry officials. Al Meera Consumer Goods Company was represented by Jassim Mohammed al-Ansari, chief executive officer, Fahad Salah Bahzad, chief financial officer, and other company executives

Jassim Mohammed al-Ansari, said: "Supporting Qatari businesses is an important part of our responsibility as a national retailer. With more than 65 stores across Qatar, we have the opportunity to connect local producers with customers every day, helping them expand their reach and grow their businesses.

Our collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry reflects our shared commitment to strengthening local production and creating more opportunities for Qatari businesses. National Product Week is an opportunity to showcase the progress made and continue building on these partnerships."

Throughout National Product Week, almeera is hosting Qatari businesses and producers in its stores, providing dedicated spaces for them to showcase their products and engage directly with shoppers. Through product demonstrations, tasting stations and interactive activities, customers have the opportunity to discover locally made products, meet the people behind them and learn more about the stories of Qatari businesses.

Qatar takes part in Jordan theatre fest

The 31st edition of the Jordan Theatre Festival opened in Amman on Friday, with the participation of 14 Arab countries, including the State of Qatar. Officials, theatre practitioners and Arab artists attended the opening.

Qatari theatre critic Dr Hassan Rashid chairs the festival's jury, which brings together prominent Arab theatre practitioners and critics. His participation highlights Qatar's presence at Arab theatre forums and its contribution to supporting and evaluating artistic and theatrical work.

The jury also includes artists Abdullah al-Turkmani from Kuwait, Essam Abu al-Qasim from Sudan and Sofiane Attia from Algeria, alongside Dr Said al-Siyabi from the Sultanate of Oman.

Running until November 14, the festival will feature ten theatrical performances, offering participants opportunities to share experiences and artistic practices and strengthen Arab cultural engagement. (**QNA**)

SVN

SVN Real Estate, CR No. 143841, Doha, State of Qatar

INVITATION FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS

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SVN invites qualified companies, institutions, and investors to submit competitive purchase offers for **Building C12**, a completed freehold commercial property strategically located on Lusail Boulevard, near Lusail Towers, within Qatar's emerging financial and business district.

The property offers an opportunity for organizations seeking to establish a prestigious corporate headquarters with office accommodation, retail facilities, and dedicated parking.

PROPERTY SPECIFICATIONS

Description	Details
Property	Building Name: C12
Location	Lusail Boulevard, Fox Hills
Ownership	Freehold
Land Area	2,440 sqm
Total Built-Up Area	13,626 sqm
Net Leasable Area	5,332.59 sqm
Office Accommodation	25 office units across 5 floors
Retail Accommodation	4 commercial units
Parking	Approximately 125 spaces
Configuration	3 Basements + Ground + Mezzanine + 5 Floors + Roof

COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS

Interested parties are invited to submit their best purchase offers for the **entire building**. Detailed property information, independent valuation, existing tenancy details, and site inspections will be made available to qualified bidders upon request.

BID SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 25th NOVEMBER 2026

Offers should include the **proposed purchase price, payment terms, evidence of financial capability, and anticipated completion date**.

The seller reserves the right to accept or reject any bid or negotiate directly with selected bidders. Completion is subject to applicable approvals, existing property rights, mortgage release, and definitive agreements.

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ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDERS

No.	Document No.	Description	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1.	QC/STC/INV/62/26	**Five Years Call-Off Supply Agreement of Welding & Workshop Consumable for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II, RLOC & RLP**	QR. 136,500	15:00 hrs. on 7th December 2026
	Brief Scope: Bidders are invited to submit proposals for the supply of Welding and Workshop Consumables as per specifications mentioned in Annexure 1 of the tender documents for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II, RLOC & RLP plant, under a call-off supply agreement, for a duration of 5 years. Bidders are required to submit the samples as per the instructions mentioned in the tender documents.			

Tender Documents for the above description can be obtained as follows:

A.Pay to Bank and send the original receipt with authorization letter via email.
For each tender pay **a non-refundable document fee of QR 1,000/-** Payable to Q-Chem, Bank Account (Contract Services - Tender) – Account Number 001-242007-003 with HSBC Bank) and submit the original receipt with an Authorization letter on Tenderer Company Letterhead with ID copy of the Tenderer representative **via email to tadvertisement@qchem.com.qa** In the authorization letter Tenderer shall nominate a single focal point with contact mobile number, **official email address,** office number, fax number for the communications related to this tender for the transfer and receipt of the tender documents. **The Bank receipt must indicate the tender number and the tenderer name (company name).**

B. Date and Time of Tender documents Issuance via email
Tender documents issuance from 8th November 2026 to 12th November 2026, 8am-12noon.

C. Proposal details
Proposals should be valid for **240 days** from the tender closing date.

D. Submission of Proposals
Guidelines for Electronic Bids Submission is attached in the Tender documents.

قطر للطاقة QatarEnergy LNG

QatarEnergy LNG
Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/MNT/7918/26 GAS CYLINDERS TESTING, REFILLING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES	04/11/2026 to 10/11/2026	0	350,000	24/11/2026

Scope of Work:
CONTRACTOR shall perform testing, refilling and maintenance services of gas cylinders for COMPANY's Onshore and Offshore Operations at CONTRACTOR's workshop in the State of Qatar.

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

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

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - https://icv.qa/en-US/ for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.

Gulf Contracting Company Celebrates 50 Years of Excellence

A five decade legacy of landmark delivery and engineering excellence in Qatar



2026 marked a historic Year for Gulf Contracting Co. We celebrated our 50th Anniversary. Our story begins in 1976 when, Gulf Housing Company was established as a collaboration with McInerney, a "system" house building specialist based in Ireland. Gulf Housing initially delivered prefabricated housing solutions to meet the growing demand for accommodation brought about by the development of the Qatari oil sector. Gulf Housing Company was built on a commitment to quality, precision and delivering high standards.

The collaboration grew and the demand to do more became a necessity, This is when Gulf Housing approached the then Emir of Qatar and requested a validation to the new provided services; their request was honored by an Emiri Decree, granting Gulf Housing permission to operate as a "general" contractor in the Qatari Construction Market, a status previously reserved for wholly owned Qatari construction businesses.

McInerney left the partnership in 1991 and Gulf Housing Co. continued as a wholly owned Qatari business. Early in 1996, an agreement was formed with Tilbury Douglas, a major UK based construction company, to expend the construction business, introduce new construction methods & standards, and to prepare for the future of the construction sector.

Based on the commitment to quality, precision, and high standards, GHC prospered during the construction boom which followed Qatar's appointment to host the 2006 Asian Games & beyond and established itself as one of the leading general Contractors in Qatar. In 2008, the company changed its name to Gulf Contracting Company GCC.

"Over the past 50 years, Gulf Contracting Company has remained committed to the principles it was founded on - a commitment to quality, precision and delivering high standards. This milestone reflects the quality of our people, our partnerships and our continued focus on delivering the highest standards. As we mark this milestone, we remain committed to building on this legacy and contributing to Qatar's future development."

Mr. Grahame McCaig,
Gulf Contracting General Manager

GCC continued to expand its operations and legacy through its subsidiaries Spacemaker, Interspace and Al Manjara Joinery – all of who are considered leaders in their respective markets.

The list of successfully delivered GCC projects is both long and impressive. GCC has been involved in almost every sector of the Qatari Construction market and list iconic projects such as Doha Festival City, the Doha West Sewage Treatment Plant, multiple Oil and Gas civil infrastructure projects to name but a few.

GCC's legacy is acknowledged by its peers, the Industry in general and the international community. Amongst many Awards & recognition, we were named Qatari Contractor of the Year in 2017 by Construction Week, highly commended in 2026 and partner of the year; Also, we have received a number of International RoSPA Health and Safety Awards in the last 3 consecutive years.

These acknowledgments not only support GCC's reputation as a trusted industry leader, but are also testament to GCC's unwavering commitment to protecting its people, its partners and to embedding world class safety and sustainability practices across every one of its projects.

Commenting on achieving the milestone, Mr. Grahame McCaig, Gulf Contracting General Manager said: "Over the past 50 years, Gulf Contracting Company has remained committed to the principles it was founded on - a commitment to quality, precision and delivering high standards. This milestone reflects the quality of our people, our partnerships and our continued focus on delivering the highest standards. As we mark this milestone, we remain committed to building on this legacy and contributing to Qatar's future development."

50
YEARS OF
EXCELLENCE

QATAR

Gulf Contracting marks 50 years of contributing to Qatar's development

Gulf Contracting Company (GCC) is celebrating its 50th anniversary, marking five decades of involvement in Qatar's construction sector, from its beginnings in prefabricated housing to delivering major projects across the country.

Established in 1976 as Gulf Housing Company through a partnership with Ireland-based McInerney, a specialist in system-built housing, the company initially focused on providing prefabricated accommodation to meet growing demand generated by the expansion of Qatar's oil industry.

Built on the principles of quality, precision and high standards, the company gradually expanded its operations as demand for construction services increased.

Following McInerney's departure from the partnership in 1991, Gulf Housing continued as a wholly Qatari-owned company.

In 1996, the company entered into an agreement with UK-based construction major Tilbury Douglas to expand its construction operations, introduce new building methods and standards, and prepare for the future growth of the sector.

The company capitalised on Qatar's construction boom following the country's selection to host the 2006 Asian Games, establishing itself as one of the leading general contractors in the market.

In 2008, Gulf Housing Company changed its name to Gulf Contracting Company, reflecting its expanding operations and broader construction portfolio.

Over the years, GCC has further strengthened its market presence through subsidiaries Spacemaker, Interspace and Al Manjara Joinery, which operate as established players in their respective sectors.

Its project portfolio spans several segments of Qatar's construction market and includes prominent developments such as Doha Festival City, the Doha West Sewage Treatment Plant and several other civil infrastructure projects in the oil and gas sector.



The company has also received industry recognition for its performance and commitment to safety. It was named Qatari Contractor of the Year by Construction Week in 2017, received a highly commended recognition in 2026 and was named Partner of the Year.



Additionally, GCC has secured several international Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Health and Safety Awards over the past three consecutive years.

The company said these accolades reflect its continued focus on protecting employees and partners while embedding international standards of health, safety and sustainability across its projects.

Commenting on the 50-year milestone, Gulf Contracting general manager, Grahame McCaig said the achievement reflected the company's commitment to the principles on which it was founded.

"Over the past 50 years, Gulf Contracting Company has remained committed to the principles it was founded on — a commitment to quality, precision and delivering high standards. This milestone reflects the quality of our people, our partnerships and our continued focus on delivering the highest standards," he said.

"As we mark this milestone, we remain committed to building on this legacy and contributing to Qatar's future development," McCaig added.

Qatar Charity builds mosques, Qur'an centres in Côte d'Ivoire

Qatar Charity continues to support local communities in Côte d'Ivoire in 2026 through the construction of 18 mosques and three Qur'an education and memorisation centres. Designed to accommodate around 1,800 worshippers and 150 male and female students, the facilities aim to benefit the communities and strengthen their educational and social role.

The projects span five main areas in central Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan District, and surrounding areas. They comprise three mosques in Bouaké, in Gbêkê Region; eight in Anyama; three in Adzopé, in La Mé Region; three in Yopougon; and one mosque and three Qur'an memorisation centres in Songon.

Qatar Charity has so far completed 11 of the 18 mosques planned for this year. Construction continues on the remaining seven, which are expected to open before the end of 2026. All three Qur'an memorisation centres have been completed.



The projects respond to needs of people in areas where some existing mosques were too small or had fallen into disrepair. Others relied on temporary structures that offered inadequate protection from the sun and rain.

These needs have coincided with growing Muslim populations in several neighborhoods and villages, increasing demand for suitable places for prayer and for children to learn the Qur'an.

Songon GMI, in Abidjan District, illustrates the transformation. Qatar Charity has built Bab Al Rayyan Mosque there, alongside three Qur'an memorisation centres, to meet residents' religious and educational needs.

Mariko Karim, the beneficiary community's principal representative, described conditions at the previous mosque: "Our old mosque was a shelter with a small, dilapidated roof. It could not accommodate all the worshippers, especially on Fridays, and many had to pray outside. We now have a proper mosque and our children can memorise the Qur'an."

One Qur'an teacher benefiting from the project said: "We used to teach the children in a cramped space with no seats and no protection. Today, we have classrooms. More students have enrolled as a result and their concentration and memorisation have improved. We pray that Allah grants the donors the best of rewards."

Vocal for local: talabat joins National Product Week



The leading everyday app in the MENA region, talabat, is once again supporting this year's National Product Week in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI). Running from November 5 to 12, talabat will leverage its digital platform to champion locally made products and help customers discover Qatari-made products, connect local businesses with customers, and encourage the community to shop local.

Throughout the week, talabat will spotlight locally made products through its in-app visibility features, social and digital channels, making it easier for customers to discover and support Qatari brands. Eligible products across talabat mart and participating partner stores will also feature the Ministry's official Made in Qatar branding, helping customers easily identify locally manufactured goods while shopping.

Moaiad Aqel, managing director of talabat Qatar, said: "National Product Week celebrates the creativity and passion behind Qatar's homegrown brands, and we are proud to continue supporting this important initiative alongside the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. By leveraging our platform and resources, we aim to bring Qatari-made products closer to customers, making them a natural choice for everyday shopping while helping local businesses reach new customers and grow."

"Every Made in Qatar purchase is a meaningful contribution to the diversified economy envisioned by Qatar National Vision 2030, and we are proud to play a role in driving that progress," he added.

Organised annually by MoCI, National Product Week highlights the quality, diversity and competitiveness of locally manufactured goods, showcasing the capabilities of Qatar's national industries and their growing contribution to the country's economy.

ICAI Doha Chapter hosts its 12th Annual Conference — "UTKARSH – BEYOND BOUNDARIES"



The Doha Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) successfully hosted its 12th Annual Conference, "UTKARSH: Beyond Boundaries", at Marriott Marquis City Center, Doha, on October 22–23, 2026. The two-day flagship event brought together distinguished professionals, business leaders, entrepreneurs and thought leaders from diverse fields, offering a platform for knowledge sharing, professional development, inspiration and meaningful networking.

The inaugural session was graced by H.E. Dr. K. Srikar Reddy, Ambassador of India to Qatar, and Ms. Laila Al-Jefairi, Director, Professional Services Sector, Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), as distinguished guests. Dr. (CA) Ankur Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman of BNW Developments, was also present for the inaugural session. CA Arun Somanath, Chairperson of ICAI Doha Chapter, and CA Dewaki Nandan Tibrewal, Vice Chairperson, welcomed the dignitaries and participants, setting the tone for two days of insightful discussions and engaging sessions.

During his address H.E. Dr. K. Srikar Reddy acknowledged the warm and multifaceted partnership between India and Qatar, rooted in centuries of maritime trade and strong people-to-people ties. He also highlighted India's progress across various sectors and encouraged Indian entrepreneurs to explore opportunities under Qatar National Vision 2030, reaffirming India's commitment to working with Qatar as a trusted partner in its journey towards becoming a developed nation.

Ms. Laila Al-Jefairi, Guest of Honour for the evening in her key note address, appreciated ICAI Doha Chapter as a trusted partner and a strong voice for the accountancy profession in Qatar. She noted that the conference theme reflects the profession's evolving role amid technological advancements and growing expectations around transparency and sustainability, with accountants increasingly contributing to strategy and trusted advisory beyond reporting and compliance.

The sessions covered a wide range of contemporary themes, combining practical professional insights with personal experiences and perspectives on leadership, career development and navigating change. The conference featured an exceptional lineup of speakers from the fields of finance, business, technology, sports, entertainment and leadership. The distinguished speakers included CA Amit Arora; Lt Cdr Bijay Nair (Retd.); CA Anand Rathi; CA Sarthak Ahuja; Master Manjunath Nayaker; Dilip Vengsarkar; CA Kanhaiya Rathi; CA Joy John; Hanifa Ymer; Dileep Balakrishnan; Raghu SD; Nabil Ghodhbane; Dr. Seby Cyriac;

A key highlight of the conference was the presentation of the CA Professional Achiever Award to CA Shanavas Bava, President of the Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) in Qatar, in recognition of his contributions and service to the community.

The conference was supported by BNW Developments(Title Sponsor); Aster DM Healthcare and Morison Qatar Chartered Accountants(Annual Conference Platinum Sponsors); Kreston SVP Chartered Accountants, Cube Innovators and Kimpton Al Rowda (Gold Sponsors); Qatar Insurance (Annual Conference Gold Sponsor); Anvin Infosystems, KPMG, MCA Consultancy, RSM Qatar, Oracle, IONIOS and Serenity Home Real Estate (Silver Sponsors); Ernst & Young, Deloitte & Touche and Fusion Group Holding (Annual Conference Silver Sponsors). Price Waterhouse Coopers Qatar (Annual Conference Knowledge Partner); SB & Partners, Alok K. Saksena & Partners, Only Coffee and Savoy Insurance Brokers (Support Sponsors); Galfar Al Misnad and Grant Thornton Qatar (Annual Conference Support Sponsors); JS Just Smart (Annual Conference Ecom Partner); Tally Solutions (Technology Partner); Supply Masters (Furnishing Partner); Easy Bits (Annual Conference Automation Partner); and Al Muftah Group, Homebox and YOLO fit (Annual Conference Associate Partners).

The 12th Annual Conference concluded on an inspiring note, reaffirming ICAI Doha Chapter's commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences, encouraging new perspectives and empowering professionals to grow beyond conventional boundaries. UTKARSH truly reflected the spirit of going beyond boundaries through knowledge, collaboration and inspiration.

In his vote of thanks, CA Dewaki Nandan Tibrewal, Vice Chairperson of the Doha Chapter, extended heartfelt gratitude to the distinguished speakers, sponsors, and volunteers whose tireless efforts ensured the event's resounding success.

He expressed appreciation for the support of the ICAI leadership, the Indian Embassy in Qatar, and the corporate fraternity for their continued collaboration with the Chapter in its journey of professional excellence.



City Center Doha celebrates 25 years

City Center Doha, one of the largest and most dynamic shopping destinations in Qatar and a wholly owned subsidiary of Aamal Company QPSC, recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its opening.

Remembering a journey that has been fundamentally connected to the wider growth of the Qatari retail and tourism sectors, the Company looked back at its exciting growth story and reaffirmed its commitment to continuous development and innovation going forward.

Looking ahead to the next 25 years and beyond City Center will strive to remain a vibrant destination that meets the evolving expectations of visitors and maintains its special place in the community.

The celebration was held under the patronage of Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, Chairman of Aamal Company QPSC and founder of City Center through its various development phases. The event was attended by distinguished guests, partners, tenants, and members of the public. It included a cake cutting ceremony along with entertainment segments through which visitors shared in celebrating a destination linked to the memories of generations of families and residents in Qatar.

Over the past quarter century, City Center Doha has established itself as one of the country's leading shopping and entertainment destinations, serving as a gathering place for families and friends and becoming a hub for different segments in society.

The mall has greatly contributed to enriching Qatar's shopping, dining, and entertainment offering while attracting local, regional, and international brands, making Doha more appealing to both residents and tourists alike.



On this occasion, Sheikh Faisal said: "When we invested in City Center Doha, we were driven by our belief in Qatar's vision and growth potential, and by our desire to create a project that would add value to the country and serve its community. To me, this project was a dream, and also a major challenge, and many doubted that it could become a reality. Today, twenty-five years later, I am proud to see that City Center Doha has become one of the key pillars in the development of the West Bay area and a catalyst for its incredible transformation. It has helped attract numerous retail brands and businesses to Qatar, created employment opportunities, and supported the growth of the retail sector."

The anniversary celebration comes as City Center Doha continues to implement renovation and modernisation projects aimed at upgrading its facilities and common areas, enhancing its mix of retail, dining, and entertainment offerings, and improving the overall customer experience.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Faisal al-Thani, vice chairman and managing director of Aamal Company QPSC, said: "City Center Doha is a jewel within Aamal's investment portfolio and a landmark that has helped transform the urban and commercial landscape of West Bay. We are committed to preserving this landmark and its standing through continued investment in its development and renewal, safeguarding its identity while ensuring it remains a distinguished destination for future generations."

Murad Kayman, general manager of City Center Doha, commented: "This celebration honours everyone who has been part of the City Center story over the past twenty-five years, including Aamal Company as the owner that has continued investing in its development, our tenants, partners, employees, and returning visitors who share their memories and special occasions with us. We wanted to bring them together on this occasion to thank them and celebrate what we have achieved together."

Mediation worth pursuing even if it takes a year: PM

From Page 1

Qatar has not stood idly by in the face of crises. For nearly two decades, it has engaged in mediation and peacemaking, driven by a firm conviction that protecting human lives comes first.
The prime minister recalled HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani's affirmation that mediation is worth pursuing even if it takes a year, provided it saves a single human life.
That conviction guides Qatar despite the difficulties and campaigns directed against its efforts.
He said the recent regional conflict, and acts of aggression against Qatar, had underscored the need for nations like Qatar.
Qatar acted despite challenging circumstances, making a substantial contribution to the first round of negotiations that produced a memorandum of understanding and helped spare the region widespread chaos at a time of high escalation risk.
Challenges in implementing the memorandum had not halted Qatar's efforts. Working with regional partners, Qatar intensified its work to prevent a new wave of escalation, with its delegation visiting Tehran five times in a single week, in meetings some lasting 18 to 20 hours. He stressed that these efforts do not mean risks have been removed or security achieved; contacts with the relevant parties have not ceased and will continue.
On the United States and Iran, he said collaboration with US administration officials and voices of reason in Tehran had kept the situation from spiralling out of control. The memorandum's conclusion, he noted, proves progress is possible and a final settlement achievable, despite complex talks. Progress must be built on rather than delayed for an ideal deal.
He warned that another round of military operations would resolve nothing, and that the region cannot withstand further escalation, having already seen its peoples, Iranian included, pay a heavy price for past confrontations. The priorities, he said, are the nuclear dossier and freedom of navigation and security in the Gulf.
Gulf security requires dialogue between Gulf states and Iran to build a framework that guarantees everyone's safety and addresses their concerns, with Iran's concerns and the Gulf states' core security concerns tackled together. His communications with regional foreign ministers, he added, reflect a shared message on the urgent need to end the conflict.
On Gaza, he affirmed that the Palestinian cause remains central to unresolved political issues. The region has lacked stability since 7 October, a period of war and expanding fronts, and mediation has faced repeated setbacks due to Israel's government positions, its continuous alteration of realities on the ground and escalating demands.
Agreements that ignore withdrawal, Gazans' right to a normal life and Palestinian statehood, he warned, leave the door open to renewed escalation. Despite a ceasefire, blockade, killings and targeting continue, with more than a thousand killed since its announcement. In practice, only a hostage-release deal has been achieved; a genuine ceasefire needs an end to hostilities, withdrawal and a credible political horizon.
On Lebanon, he noted shelling continues despite a ceasefire agreement, occupation persists with no withdrawal timeline, and restrictions hinder Lebanese Armed Forces operations in the south. Acting with impunity and disregarding international law, he said, exposes the whole region to persistent danger.
He reaffirmed dialogue as the basis of sustainable regional security, recalling the Amir's 2015 call before the UN General Assembly for serious dialogue between the Gulf Cooperation Council states and Iran on the root causes of their differences.
Security arrangements, he explained, cannot rest on promises alone. They need concrete steps and guarantees against aggression or threats of force, followed by trust-building and expanded common interests. He also highlighted considerable potential for economic cooperation between Gulf states and Iran once the nuclear dossier is resolved.
Any comprehensive regional vision, he emphasised, must resolve the Palestinian question and establish a Palestinian state, so no party poses a threat to another. Alliances formed in response to threats, he noted, should not become a source of polarisation; shared interests and bold leadership offer the region a better future.
He reviewed Qatar's economic and diplomatic development, noting that its 1995 gas-sector investment laid the foundation for its role in global energy supplies. Its engagement has built mediation expertise and trust without seeking hegemony over others. Qatar has institutionalised that experience with like-minded partners; in 2025 it engaged in roughly 16 mediation files, including prisoner exchanges, ceasefires and wider peace initiatives.
He cited cooperation with Norway and Switzerland on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, with Spain and Norway on Colombia, and Norwegian-Qatari teamwork in Afghanistan. Integrating diverse expertise, despite differing political systems and economic models, produces tangible results.
Such cooperation, he affirmed, can extend to investment and energy, helping spread prosperity, bolster regional stability and secure the future of its peoples, while making a positive contribution to the world. (**QNA**)

'Prosperous states' urged to shape global peace

From Page 1



The post-war international order, he recalled, rested on the principle that peace could not rely on military strength alone, but on rules, institutions and open markets.
Since 1945, more than 120 countries have joined the international community, giving previously underrepresented peoples a voice. This opened opportunities for smaller countries, including Qatar, to prosper while being protected against annexation, regional domination and rivalry between major powers.
Many of these countries were neither regional powers nor superpowers, yet had made considerable progress by investing in their people, infrastructure and economic models. Some now use their collective influence to advance peace and stability.
Traditional developed and developing classifications, he argued, fail to reflect their achievements, so he proposed a new designation: "prosperous states," meaning countries that are resilient, stable, prosperous and trusted, and have turned their small size into an advantage.
The world, he said, stands at a crossroads shaped by overlapping conflicts, technological breakthroughs and shifting alliances, a historic moment that comes once in a generation. The international community must rise to it rather than remain passive.
He acknowledged that the post-war order has not always been fair or consistently applied, and cautioned against idealising a system in which power has always played a role.
Still, it remains preferable to the alternatives, much as democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others. The UN Charter's principles, including sovereign equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes, have helped smaller nations defend their rights and expand their room for independent decisions.
Yet while economic opportunity has globalised, decisions on peace and security remain concentrated among a small number of countries, often excluding nations essential to global prosperity.
The ongoing war in the region, he said, has exposed the danger of this imbalance. Decades of military adventurism, unresolved conflicts, violations of international law and ambitions for regional domination have disrupted energy supplies, threatened vital maritime routes and unsettled markets. Countries not directly involved are bearing the consequences, and smaller states are increasingly the first victims of conflicts they played no part in creating. He asked how states with limited strategic depth and little coercive power could help preserve the international order without compromising their sovereignty.
Turning to Qatar, he said the country recognised that its future depended not only on its resources but on the capabilities it developed and the relationships it built. It therefore invested in its people and economy, establishing itself as a reliable and trusted partner.
Qatar's geography and the realities of the global economy, he explained, meant its prosperity could not be separated from regional and international conflicts. That understanding led it to invest in peace facilitation and mediation, keeping channels open to parties others could not always reach.
Its numerous mediation efforts have given it unique experience in conflict resolution. He described Qatar's journey as that of a nation whose people prospered and then extended a hand to share the benefits.
Qatar now faces campaigns promoting misleading narratives, he said, as well as military attacks by parties who do not believe peace should be humanity's natural condition. Such actors subscribe to a Hobbesian view in which conflict is the natural state and power alone decides outcomes, and they actively work to make that a reality.
Those who regard the rules-based order as unnatural, he warned, are seeking to undermine it, and the system must be protected precisely against them.
The challenges facing Gulf countries, he said, extend beyond the region to the international system itself and to the opportunities that enabled Qatar to prosper. Qatar is not alone, as other prosperous countries have also used an open environment to build strong institutions and connected economies. Prosperous states, however, cannot meet these challenges independently or replace major powers. By combining their experience, economic capabilities and diplomatic networks, they could help build and sustain an integrated framework for peace.
Lasting stability, he stressed, requires prevention, effective crisis responses, efforts to end conflicts and the preservation of the conditions for stability. Neglecting any of these would let conflict become the prevailing condition.
He also questioned the role of international institutions, noting that regional and non-regional groupings increasingly fill gaps where existing bodies have failed.
Peace and stability, he reiterated, are not luxuries for prosperous states but fundamental conditions for their development. He revealed that Qatari mediators are currently working to prevent a new wave of escalation in the region.
Responsibility for stability cannot simply be delegated, he concluded, and the international community should not surrender to inaction.
History, he stressed, remembers those who take the initiative and shape events, not passive observers. (**QNA**)

Media City hosts CNN Academy Doha, providing opportunities for local talent

By A Staff Reporter
Doha



CNN has wrapped up the first CNN Academy Doha, delivered through its partnership with Media City Qatar. The two-week immersive programme brought together 30+ students from three Qatar-based universities for hands-on training in journalism and storytelling, connecting local talent with industry expertise and practical skills.

Building on its previous support for local participants in CNN Academy across the region, CNN brought the programme to Qatar for the first time, expanding opportunities for hands-on industry training and equipping local talent with the skills needed to contribute to the country's growing media sector.

Students from Northwestern University in Qatar, Qatar University, and the University of Doha for Science and Technology took part in the training, led by CNN experts and focused on storytelling in the AI age. As part of the experience, they visited CNN's Doha studio for a behind-the-scenes look at the production of CNN Creators, which follows digital-native storytellers exploring technology, art, culture, sport, and social trends.

The programme also offered participants a special opportunity for a live conversation with Ellana Lee, Group Senior Vice-President, General Manager APAC and Global Head of Productions at CNN, who shared insights into her experience leading teams across CNN and the network's work in producing and delivering stories across platforms to audiences worldwide. The session was hosted by Jonathan Hawkins, Vice-President of Communications, Global News at CNN.

"Preparing the next generation of media professionals means connecting education with the realities of the industry," said Hamad Omar AlMannai, CEO of Media City Qatar. "Through initiatives such as CNN Academy Doha, we are helping young talent learn from international expertise and understand how to apply their skills in professional settings. Building these pathways is an investment in the people who will contribute to Qatar's media sector over the long term."

Ellana Lee said: "It was a privilege to spend time with this group of young storytellers and aspiring journalists, not only to share our experiences as professionals, but also to hear from them. It's gratifying to know that there is a burgeoning passion for journalism in Qatar. I'm also incredibly proud that CNN is playing a role in providing the skills, training and insights to help them navigate through the modern media world at a time of rapid change."



Among this year's participants is Pakinam Elseehy, a journalism student at Northwestern University in Qatar. Reflecting on her participation, she highlighted the value of the practical skills and personalised guidance she received. "This course exceeded my expectations," said Elseehy. "We got treated as respected journalists from people way above our rank which really helped inspire me."

For Hana Muneer, a journalism and mass communications student at Qatar University, the programme offered a chance to gain first-hand insight into how an international news organisation operates and to connect with industry professionals. "I was keen on meeting people, getting to know what it's like in the industry and knowing how CNN does their things," she said.

Qatar a model for investing in culture: Unesco official

From Page 1



Nayef al-Fayez. **PICTURE:** Shaji kayamkulam.

The experience of countries such as Qatar, he said, could offer useful lessons to other nations seeking to build their own cultural and creative industries.
"It is important for us to continue that focus, bring the knowledge and the know-how, and say that the successes we have seen in countries such as Qatar could also be replicated in other countries that are less fortunate," he noted.
However, he cautioned against applying a single investment model to every country, saying approaches must be adapted to local circumstances, the needs of different cultural sectors and the requirements of individual artists.
"There is no one model. There are different models that have to cater to different areas and to different artists," he said. The Unesco official, who was in Qatar to attend the World Investment Forum, said culture had received little attention at previous editions of the forum. That made its inclusion this time particularly significant, he said, given the participation of numerous international and regional organisations, institutions, private-sector representatives and official entities.
Discussions on culture as an investment opportunity, he said, were important in highlighting the economic potential of a sector traditionally associated with preserving heritage and passing traditions on to future generations.
"Culture holds much more than the preservation of tradition and passing it on to generations to come. It is also about the financial opportunities that come with it," he said.
Calling for stronger partnerships between governments, the private sector, artists and local communities to unlock investment in culture and the creative industries, al-Fayez said bringing these players together with international organisations was essential to building a sustainable cultural economy. Cultural development, he stressed, required approaches tailored to the sector's specific needs.
He observed that artists and creative professionals had talent, expertise and intellectual property, but often lacked access to the financing needed to develop their work and expand their businesses.
Unesco's work in the field, he explained, was guided by two key conventions addressing different but complementary aspects of culture. The first, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, focuses on keeping living traditions active and passing them on to future generations. The second, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, supports the creative arts and artists.
Unesco's role, he said, was to provide a platform where governments, private investors, artists, creators and communities could come together to develop opportunities for collaboration and mobilise the necessary financing.
"The next step would be to strengthen these partnerships and ensure that the benefits of cultural investment extend beyond a limited number of countries or regions," he added.

US seeks to tighten Iran trade blockade

Reuters
Washington

Building on a months-long naval blockade on Iran, the US military said yesterday it is launching a task force to help crack down on Tehran's movement of advanced weapons and other sanctioned material over its land borders and through the Caspian Sea.
Task Force Iron Gate, which was first reported by Reuters, will be based in Tampa, Florida, and will coordinate with other US government agencies. Beyond movement of weapons, it will also focus on halting the flow of dual-use technologies used by Iran and stemming what Washington calls illegal revenue streams.
The establishment of the task force is the latest illustration of how the US is still searching for ways to increase pressure on Tehran, more than eight months after launching with Israel a war against Iran.
While US strikes have dealt devastating blows to Iran's conventional military and the US naval blockade has severely restricted its crude exports through the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea, Iran still poses a formidable threat to the region and its rulers have tightened their grip on the country.
A Reuters investigation found Iran has created a secret network of military agencies to import at least $2bn in hardware, explosives and heavy-duty trucks since January 2025, evading both the US naval blockade and Western sanctions.
The material entered Iran by cargo ship across the Caspian Sea from Russia, by truck from Central Asia, and by freight planes from China, the Reuters investigation showed.
US Central Command said the task force will coordinate with other government agencies. A US military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that was expected to include the Treasury, State and Justice Departments but also the intelligence community.
"Strengthening CENTCOM's collaboration with US interagency partners will further constrain Iran's ability to finance terrorism, rebuild weapons factories, and replenish their military," Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander of Central Command, said in a statement.
Central Command estimated that its naval blockade has prevented Iran from exporting more than $25bn in crude oil.
Still, Iran has proven resilient and gloated following US midterm election results that punished Trump's Republican Party, giving control of Congress to opposition Democrats. Vice President JD Vance blamed the Iran war for electoral rout, and appeared to question whether the conflict was worth it.
Mediators have intensified efforts in recent days to end the war between Iran and the United States amid fears it could reignite after the US midterm elections.
Trump has been threatening to carry out a new offensive against Iran, putting countries in the Gulf on edge, since Tehran has threatened broad retaliation against Gulf infrastructure.
Reuters has reported that US intelligence assessments in recent months have indicated that renewed strikes on Iran would not fundamentally change Tehran's negotiating position or lead to the fall of Iran's government.

WORLD

Trump signals fightback after midterm debacle with new chief of staff

AFP
Washington

Known for his sharp suits, sunglasses and menacing air, Stephen Miller has long been one of US President Donald Trump's most loyal and combative consiglieres.

Now Trump has named the architect of his immigration crackdown as his chief of staff — the clearest possible signal that the gloves are off after the US midterms. Miller, 41, said Friday he was ready for battle. "The mission now is more clear than ever: Fight with all of our soul to support our President and defend this magnificent Republic," Miller said on X.

His appointment fired up a MAGA movement stunned by the Republican hammering in the midterms.

"IT'S MILLER TIME," former congressman Matt Gaetz said, quoting, like many other allies, a famous US beer commercial.

Democrats were not so thrilled.

"Stephen Miller is a dangerous xenophobe and reckless extremist who has American blood on his hands," incoming House Majority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said.

Dubbed Trump's "brain," Miller has been the most ideological presence in the president's inner circle since he started working for him in 2016.

Miller frequently echoes far-right talking points about Western civilisation being under threat from an "invasion" of migrants — and under Trump he has translated that into policy.

It was Miller, whose official job title is currently deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security advisor, who was behind the mass deportations in Trump's second term.

Reports said Miller pushed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to drastically step up their deportations after levels under Trump fell below those of the Biden administration.

For Democrats, Stephen Miller is the symbol of the excesses of Trump's immigration policy, from the masked agents rounding up undocumented migrants, to the shootings by federal agents that left two Americans dead.

His management style is reportedly equally hardline.

In their book *Regime Change*, *New York Times* journalists Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan said Miller was a domineering boss who regularly berated staff members. Miller would also present his views as requests from the president — but was cautious about expressing his opinions in front of Trump himself, and was careful not to leave a paper trail, they reported.

In the early months of Trump's second presidency Miller was often a combative presence in front of the cameras on the White House driveway. But after the outrage over shootings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good by immigration agents in Minneapolis in January prompted the White House to roll back the policy, he has kept a lower profile.

First Lady Melania Trump even complained to President Trump that some of her friends were being swept up in the crackdown, prompting Trump to tell aides Miller had gone "too far," the *Wall Street Journal* reported this week.

Now, however, he has risen further than ever. "Stephen's been with me from the beginning," Trump said, adding, "He gets it."

Born in liberal Santa Monica in Los Angeles, Miller joined as a speechwriter just before the start of Trump's first term — and in that time his hardline stance made him something of an outlier.

The young firebrand was one of the designs of the so-called "Muslim travel bans" in Trump's first presidency, which later ran into legal difficulties after they were poorly drafted.

Miller however largely avoided the chaotic feuding that engulfed Trump's first White House.

And he stuck by his boss even as Trump's first term ended in the disgrace of the US Capitol attack on January 6, 2021.

His wife Katie is also a prominent figure in Trumpworld.

She was the spokeswoman for Elon Musk's ill-fated Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and has since carved out as an influencer in the MAGA and "tradwife" movements.

Pena questioned for ueno bank implosion

AFP
Asuncion


Impeached Paraguay's President Santiago Pena (L) arriving at the Attorney General's Office in Asuncion. (**AFP**)

Paraguayan prosecutors yesterday began questioning former president Santiago Pena over his alleged involvement in a banking crisis over which he was impeached a day earlier, a police source confirmed to AFP.

Pena, who is being investigated for breach of trust, influence peddling and embezzlement, entered the attorney general's office in the capital Asuncion through a side door shortly after 11:00am.

The prosecutor in charge of the probe, Christian Benitez, said that Pena could be formally charged as early as possible.

Senators voted unanimously on Friday to remove Paraguay's youngest-ever president from office, three days after the implosion of ueno bank, one of the country's biggest lenders.

Pena, a conservative former finance minister, was placed under house arrest minutes after his impeachment.

Pena was succeeded by former vice president Pedro Alliana, who promised not to abandon the almost 3mn depositors, including pensioners, affected by ueno's demise.

On the streets of Asuncion there was rejoicing at Pena's ouster.

"Justice has been done. Now we want him to give us back our money and go to jail," Jessica Aquino, 32, told AFP.

But the news that Alliana, who is from the same right-wing Colorado Party, would take over angered some demonstrators.

"He's from the same team, he knew about it (the trouble at ueno)," Edson Vazquez complained to AFP.

The collapse of ueno, which started out as a digital-first fintech company and grew into a major bank that handled the accounts of several state entities, rocked the usually stable South American nation.

US-backed Pena, who sold his stake in the group that controlled the bank last year, had offered his resignation.

But lawmakers pressed ahead with impeachment proceedings in order to strip him of the political immunity he would have enjoyed had he stepped down.

Thousands of people had taken to the streets furiously demanding their money back after the Central Bank took control of ueno, citing fears for its solvency.

Advance payments to an unspecified number of depositors began on Thursday afternoon, a Central Bank official told AFP.

Pena's removal is a further blow for US President Donald Trump's network of allies in South America.

Trump's favourite for Brazilian president, Flavio Bolsonaro, was defeated by left-wing incumbent Lula Inacio Lula da Silva last month.

Alliana will serve out the remainder of Pena's term, which ends in 2028.

Writing on X yesterday, Juan Pablo Segura, US assistant secretary of state for Western hemisphere affairs, called Paraguay a "strategic partner, friend and ally of the United States" and said Washington looked forward to working with Alliana.

Lula, also reacting on X to events in Paraguay, said he looked forward to welcoming Alliana to Brazil soon.

Syria denies plans to send troops to fight in Yemen

Reuters
Damascus

Syria has no plans to send troops to Yemen, a Syrian diplomatic source told state news agency SANA, dismissing reports of a possible deployment while adding that military co-operation with Saudi Arabia could eventually expand.

Saudi Arabia has been locked in worsening hostilities with the Iran-allied Houthis since July, when the wider conflict in the Middle East reignited the Yemen war, and Riyadh has since sought both defensive and offensive support from a range of allies.

Reuters reported yesterday, citing two Syrian military sources and a senior US official, that Syria had sent a limited number of military personnel to Saudi Arabia in recent weeks to provide military advice and training as the kingdom faces attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis.

The source told SANA that the current military co-operation focused on training forces, building their capabilities and exchanging military expertise. Co-ordination visits by Saudi officials to Syria are set to begin next month, with the co-operation potentially developing into a mutual defence agreement or Syria joining the Makkah Pact, depending on the shared interests of both countries, the source said.

The Makkah Pact is a defence agreement signed in Makkah in August by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye.

Turkiye ratified the pact on Thursday, clearing the way for Ankara to provide military support to Riyadh.


A Yemeni man carries a wounded child into a hospital in the Bani Hushaysh district, located on the eastern outskirts of Sanaa. (**AFP**)

Houthis say 27 killed in Saudi strikes on Yemen

AFP
Sanaa

Houthi media said yesterday that Saudi strikes killed 27 people, most of them women and children, in Yemen's Sanaa province, as deaths mount in the country's revived civil war.

The UN says more than 1,600 people have been killed and more than 300,000 displaced since fighting resumed in the impoverished country.

The death toll from the Saudi-led coalition's strikes on Al-Shariya village has risen to 27, most of them women and children, with 36 people wounded, the Houthis' health ministry said in a statemen.

Saba agency said yesterday that operations to recover victims from the rubble were ongoing and that "aircraft targeted paramedics with two strikes".

The Iran-backed group's Al-Masirah TV broadcast footage that it said was filmed in Al-Shariya, showing smoke rising from a struck site, piles of debris and wounded people in hospital.

Saudi Arabia, fighting in Yemen in support of the internationally recognised government, has not commented on the report.

The Saudi-led coalition in a statement yesterday said it had intercepted and destroyed a Houthi missile launched towards Riyadh province.

The Houthis, meanwhile, said they had launched multiple missile and drone attacks against Saudi troops and infrastructure both in the Gulf kingdom and Yemen. The group said six operations targeted Aramco oil facilities, Riyadh airport and Saudi military positions on both sides of the border, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree posted on X.

On Friday, an attack on a market in Taiz province killed 30 people. The Houthis said Saudi airstrikes were to blame, while Yemen's government forces accused Houthis of having fired a ballistic missile at the site.

At least 12 killed in Chile highway collision

At least 12 people died and 13 others were injured when a truck, public bus and car collided in Chile yesterday. The accident occurred on Route 66, near Atalaya in the coastal region of Valparaiso, about 120 km northwest of the capital, Santiago. "So far, the official report is 12 dead and 13 injured," the presidential delegate for Valparaiso, Manuel Millones said. Fire service chief Cesar Carreno said the truck and the bus collided head-on and most of the casualties were at the front of the bus. (**AFP**)

US offers $20mn reward for info on Iran's nuclear programme

AFP
Washington

Washington is offering a $20mn reward "and possible relocation" for information about Iran's nuclear programme, the US military said Friday, as President Donald Trump reiterated Tehran wants to make a deal to end the war.

A State Department programme, Rewards for Justice, "is offering a reward of up to $20mn and possible relocation for information about Iran's nuclear programme, including its facilities, equipment, and associated personnel, such as those in the scientific community," US Central Command said on X.

The programme was established in 1984 under the State Department's national security rewards programme to offer money for information that protects American lives and interests.

In its statement about the reward, the State Department said Iran's "lack of compliance with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) on safeguards obligations has led to the agency's loss of 'continuity of knowledge' regarding Iran's production and inventory of key components like centrifuges. It gave no specific parameters on what information would yield a $20mn reward.

Trump has repeatedly said US forces have effectively obliterated Iran's nuclear programme. "If we didn't hit Iran, you wouldn't have Israel today," Trump said Friday night in West Palm Beach, Florida. "If they had nuclear, they would have used nuclear. They would have obliterated the Middle East."

But the president also said Iran — which he stressed has had its economy and military severely damaged over eight months of war — is eager to end the conflict. "We're dealing with them now. They want to make a deal very badly," he said. Diplomatic efforts by mediators have been in full swing in an attempt to prevent any resumption of fighting. And on Tuesday Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said his government was still trying to resolve the crisis through dialogue.

Earlier this week Trump said he still had to "take care" of one or two targets, including so-called Pickaxe Mountain in central Iran, a suspected nuclear site which Tehran denies is such a facility.

Heavy rains leave tens of thousands without shelter in Gaza

AFP
Gaza City


Displaced Palestinians attempt to clear a water puddle outside their flooded tents amid heavy rainfall in Gaza. (**AFP**)

Heavy rain yesterday flooded tens of thousands of displaced people's tents in war-devastated Gaza, Palestinian authorities said, leaving them without shelter.

In a statement, the Hamas-run government media office said that about "70,000 tents sheltering tens of thousands of displaced people were flooded on the first day" of rains.

It also noted the "collapse of dozens of cracked walls and roofs, which caused injuries", some critical, in various areas of the tiny territory.

Since yesterday morning, hundreds of displaced families have been seen fleeing camps in parts of Gaza City and in the central and northern areas of the Strip after they were inundated by rainwater.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Bassal told AFP his teams had received more than 1,500 calls during the night from residents requesting urgent assistance after their tents were flooded, explaining that the agency "is operating without any equipment or capabilities".

"We have issued an urgent distress call to the international community and humanitarian organisations to intervene immediately to save hundreds of thousands of displaced people from the flooding of their tents."

"We cannot face the consequences of this storm on our own."

Um Muhammad al-Hersh, 45, who lives with her family in a tent in western Gaza, told AFP: "We were not able to save the mattresses, and all the clothes were soaked. Our suffering is repeated every winter."

Maryam Odeh, 34, who lives with her children in Deir al-Balah, said, "We no longer know how to protect our children. My children ask me where we will sleep tonight, and I have no answer".

For his part, Khaled al-Najjar, 41, said, "We fear for our children not only from the flooding of the tents, but also from the cold and the widespread diseases".

A coalition of Palestinian civil society organisations warned in a statement of "the catastrophe that has come to threaten the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents", pointing to the risk of the spread of diseases and epidemics.

The coalition, which includes dozens of local institutions and organisations, called for "pressure on Israel to allow the entry of humanitarian aid without restrictions".

A fragile ceasefire came into effect on October 10, 2025, after two years of war.

Despite the ceasefire agreement reached with Egyptian, Qatari, and American mediation, the Israeli army continues airstrikes and ground operations on an almost daily basis.

Mustafa Qazzaat, a member of the Gaza city council and an official in the Strip's emergency committee, said Israel has not allowed prefabricated homes to shelter the displaced in Gaza since the truce was announced, and has only permitted the entry of limited numbers of tents.

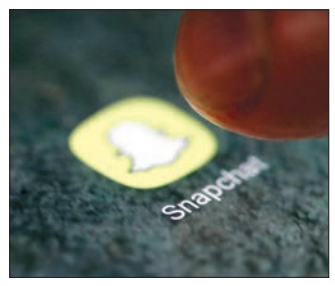
Qazzaat told AFP yesterday that Gaza "needs 200,000 prefabricated homes urgently, in addition to the entry of heavy machinery to remove the rubble of destroyed homes and buildings, open main roads, and urgently provide electricity and heating".

Egypt reopens embassy in Libya after 12 years

Egypt reopened its embassy in the Libyan capital of Tripoli yesterday which had been closed since 2014 when violence gripped the country. Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty inaugurated the embassy's headquarters in Tripoli after arriving in Libya earlier in the day.
The Tripoli-based government said in a statement the reopening marked "a step reflecting the development of bilateral relations between the two countries". Libya has struggled to recover from the chaos that followed the 2011 Nato-backed uprising that toppled longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.
Two governments are currently vying for power: a UN-recognised administration in Tripoli led by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah and its rival in the east backed by Haftar. Egypt has historically been a proponent of eastern Libya's Haftar. (**AFP**)

Snapchat starts disabling friend-finder feature for UK children, regulator says

Reuters
London



Snapchat logo is seen in this illustration. (**Reuters/File photo**)

British media regulator Ofcom said on Friday that Snapchat had begun disabling its "Find Friends" feature by default for child users in Britain, in what it called an important step to reduce the risk of online grooming.

The friend-discovery feature helps users find and add new contacts.

Ofcom said the change would make it harder for strangers to contact children on the image-sharing social media platform, one it considers among the largest and most popular online services used by children in Britain.

The regulator said in May that Snapchat was used by 32% of children aged 8-12 in Britain, despite the platform's minimum age restriction of 13.

Oliver Griffiths, director of Ofcom's Online Safety Group, said the change was "long overdue" and the regulator would monitor Snapchat's rollout of the new protection this month.

Snapchat had committed to make such a change in May, and told the regulator more recently that effective age checks for under 18s should be in place by the end of the year.

A spokesperson for Snapchat said the platform would "continue to strengthen our protections as risks evolve and work constructively with Ofcom, safety experts, families, and young people to help ensure Snapchat remains a safe place for people to communicate and express themselves."

There have long been concerns about online grooming on social media.A 2025 analysis of British police data by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children showed that 40% of recorded offences involving sexual communication with a child where the platform was identified took place on Snapchat.

Ofcom has pressed major tech firms to introduce stronger anti-grooming measures. It has said that online grooming can have "devastating, lifelong consequences" for children.

The regulator also re-issued a warning to other tech companies failing to tackle grooming risks, saying they risked fines of up to 10% of their qualifying global revenue.

US, China officials raise trade 'concerns' as Apec approaches

AFP
Beijing


US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent speaks to the media next to US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. (**Reuters/File photo**)

Top officials from Washington and Beijing held "frank" talks on their countries' testy trade relationship on Friday, ahead of an Asia-Pacific summit in China this month where their leaders are due to meet.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer held a call with Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng and discussed economic and trade commitments over the last year, both sides said.

The Americans stressed "the importance of China fully and immediately implementing its commitments" and highlighted "concerns about recent Chinese actions", according to a statement released by the US Treasury Department.

China's He, meanwhile, expressed "serious concerns over recent economic and trade restrictive measures imposed by the United States", according to a state media report shared online by Beijing's commerce ministry yesterday.

The report did not specify which measures He was referring to, but added that the talks were "frank, in-depth and constructive".

Bessent "underscored that continued progress depends on concrete results and that the United States will closely assess China's implementation of the arrangement", said the Treasury.

The statement referenced China's commitments from an October 2025 meeting between presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit.

China is hosting this year's Apec gathering from November 18-9 in Shenzhen, which could also see a trilateral meeting with Trump, Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Beijing's foreign ministry said this week it was in contact with Washington and Moscow about the possibility.

The Busan agreement, which reflected calming tensions between the superpowers after they had exchanged tariff escalations earlier in 2025, required China to purchase US soybeans this year and through 2028.

China also agreed to suspend new export controls on rare earths and to issue general licences for exports of the materials.

The accord initially covered one year, but the two sides extended the ceasefire through to January 10, 2027, during Xi's September visit to the White House.

Both sides agreed during Friday's call to "properly manage differences" and promote a "stable" US-China trade relationship, according to the Chinese commerce ministry's readout yesterday.

In a separate statement, the ministry reiterated China's "firm" opposition to new US sanctions targeting Cuba, which affected two Chinese companies.

The statement from an unnamed spokesperson added that Washington's recent sanctions "escalation" against China ran counter to the consensus reached by Trump and Xi.

Trade experts have said one of the main sources of friction is over the level of Chinese rare-earth exports, which are crucial for the production of smartphones, automobiles and military equipment.

Malaysian king at odds with AG over ex-PM 's pardon

AFP
Kuala Lumpur


Royal Malaysia policemen are seen as prison vehicles enter former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak's house in Kuala Lumpur on Friday. (**AFP**)

Malaysia's king said yesterday that the attorney-general risked denying a royal order by delaying ex-prime minister Najib Razak's release from prison, adding there was no ambiguity to the pardon he was granted.

The 73-year-old Najib was jailed for his role in one of the largest-ever global plunders of a sovereign wealth fund, the now-defunct 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

But King Sultan Ibrahim granted him a conditional pardon in September, allowing him to serve out the rest of his sentence at home provided he pay a $12mn fine.

On Friday, the country's attorney-general blocked the former prime minister's transfer to house arrest after the fine was paid, saying his office needed more clarification on the pardon.

The king said yesterday there was nothing to clarify, calling the pardon "clear, evident and without any ambiguity".

"There should be no confusion in interpretation," King Ibrahim said in a statement, adding it was not tied to any other cases against the former leader.

"Given that all conditions in the conditional pardon order have been fulfilled, any argument questioning the order leads towards denying the order of His Majesty the King."

Najib's lawyers thanked the monarch on Saturday, saying there was "no basis" for authorities to keep Razak in prison "a moment longer".

"They must transfer him immediately to his residence at Jalan Langgak Duta to serve his house arrest, as His Majesty has ordered," lawyer Farhan Shafee said in a statement.

The attorney-general's office issued its own statement shortly afterwards, denying it was challenging the king's authority while giving no indication if it intended to immediately release Najib.

"This step is not aimed at delaying or denying the implementation of the Conditional Pardon Order, but to avoid any conflict in the implementation of the orders in force and to ensure no sentence is implemented unlawfully," it said.

Hours later, the prime minister's office said the attorney-general was seeking an audience with the king to "seek pardon" and express an intent to comply, while insisting that legal questions remained that only a court could decide.

A day earlier, the attorney-general's office said it had sought a "temporary suspension of the execution of the house arrest" pending further investigation into the terms of Najib's pardon, adding he would remain in prison.

"During this period, his detention status shall be maintained in his existing place of detention, subject to the powers and instructions of the relevant authorities," it said.

An AFP reporter saw Najib on Friday leave the Kajang Prison compound in a silver car, followed by a convoy of vehicles.

Najib did not appear at his house, according to reporters, and a government minister said he was just out for a previously scheduled dental appointment.

The same convoy that whisked Najib out of the prison compound returned more than four hours later under police escort, an AFP reporter saw.

Najib was sentenced to 12 years in prison in July 2020 in a first trial over vast sums of money siphoned from a former 1MDB subsidiary called SRC International Sdn Bhd.

But a pardons board later halved the term, and his fine was reduced to 50mn ringgit ($12.3mn).

His sentence in this case is scheduled to be completed by August 2028.

Days after Najib's December bid for house arrest was turned down, he was sentenced to another 15 years behind bars in a separate trial, also linked to the 1MDB scandal.

Najib has also been fined 11.4bn ringgit for his role in the corruption scandal, which took place more than a decade ago.

He is currently appealing the 15-year sentence, which is only set to start once the six-year sentence is completed.

India lands heavy-lift military aircraft at highest altitude

AFP
New Delhi

The Indian Air Force said yesterday it had successfully landed a heavy-lift transport aircraft at the highest altitude anywhere in the world in remote Ladakh bordering China.

The IL-76MD, a four-engine Russian-origin turbofan military aircraft also known as Ganjraj, landed at an airfield at 4,154m (13,629 feet) above sea level close to the frontier with China.

"An Indian Air Force IL-76MD has scripted history with a successful landing at Nyoma, marking the highest-altitude landing ever achieved by the aircraft anywhere in the world," the IAF said in a statement.

It described the landing as a "milestone that reinforces India's strategic airlift capability", and said it was "a new height in aviation history".

Images posted by the IAF on social media showed the aircraft landing and taking off from the runway surrounded by barren mountains in the cold desert area, where temperatures can plummet to minus 20C.

The military airfield at Nyoma was completed last year as part of a push for military infrastructure in the icy region following a border clash in 2020 that killed 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers.

India and China compete fiercely for influence in South Asia. Relations have improved slowly since that clash, with renewed political contacts at the highest levels.

However, deep distrust remains and both sides maintain military deployments along their roughly 3,500km (2,175-mile) high-altitude border along Tibet owing to unresolved territorial disputes.

Landing the Gajraj aircraft, which can carry heavy military equipment, at Nyoma could boost India's rapid deployment and strategic capabilities in high-altitude terrain.

N Korea condemns FATF decision to keep it on crime blacklist

North Korea condemned as politically motivated a decision by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to retain it as a high-risk jurisdiction subject to countermeasures.
In a statement carried by state media KCNA, the foreign ministry accused the global financial watchdog of serving the US policy of hostility toward North Korea. Allegations of money laundering, terrorist financing, drug trafficking and counterfeiting "have nothing to do with" North Korea and were fabricated by the US and its allies to demonise the country, the ministry said.
The Paris-based FATF said on October 30 that it was keeping North Korea on its list of high-risk countries for the sixteenth consecutive year.
North Korea continued to have "significant deficiencies" in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, while its illicit activities posed serious risks related to the financing of weapons of mass destruction, FATF said in a statement.
The financial crimes watchdog urged countries to end correspondent relationships with North Korean banks, close their branches and subsidiaries, and limit financial transactions and business relationships with North Korean individuals. North Korea, Iran and Myanmar remain on the FATF list. (**Reuters**)

Ministry rejects findings of excess ethanol in petrol in Karnataka

India's petroleum ministry yesterrday rejected a report by authorities in the southern state of Karnataka that some petrol pumps there sold fuel with more ethanol than the 20% limit, saying its own tests showed supplies met national standards.
Four in five petrol pumps surveyed in India's southern state of Karnataka were selling fuel blended with ethanol content above the permitted 20% limit, a minister in the opposition-ruled state government said on Friday.
The findings had raised fresh concerns about fuel quality as India expands the use of E20 fuel, a petrol blend consisting of 20% ethanol, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive to reduce crude imports, lower emissions and support domestic ethanol producers.
Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi called the matter "petrol theft" and urged Modi to disclose actual ethanol levels and act against companies that over-blend.
The petroleum ministry questioned how the state government drew and tested its samples
It added that state-run fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum had also disputed the findings and had sought independent testing of Karnataka's samples. (**Reuters**)

New Zealand election first count ends with two main parties nearly deadlocked

Reuters
Wellington

New Zealand's ruling centre-right National Party and main opposition Labour were nearly deadlocked in the popular vote after initial counting in the nationwide general election yesterday.

Results from the Electoral Commission show that with more than 95% of the ballots counted, both parties were polling just short of 30% of the popular vote, with just a few thousand votes separating the two.

A projection from New Zealand's Electoral Commission showed the current three-party ruling coalition led by National would have a majority of two seats, after an election dominated by a struggling economy and voter disillusionment with the two biggest contenders.

Both parties said it would take time for the final results to be known.

"It is heartening to see that on the numbers so far, National is once again the largest party in parliament, and we have a pathway to forming the next government," Prime Minister Christopher Luxon told supporters in Auckland.

"But I have to tell you right now, it is too close to call."

Labour leader Chris Hipkins delivered a similar message in Upper Hutt, a city northeast of the capital Wellington.

"Tonight, New Zealand has spoken. It may take us a little bit longer to figure out exactly what it is that you've said," he told supporters.

Special votes, which include those from overseas voters or people outside their electorate, will not be included in the vote count until official results are released on November 27.

Those votes have typically favoured the left, with parties on the right losing support following the count. This could also be key in seats where races remain tight between Labour and National candidates.

Left-leaning parties including Labour are aiming to make the National-led coalition the first one-term government in just over 50 years.

New Zealand's electoral system makes coalitions the norm, and the tightness of this year's race means one or more of the country's smaller parties will almost certainly participate in a governing coalition.

The country switched to a mixed member proportional system in 1996, which means people vote for both the party and a local constituency candidate.

There are 71 constituency seats and at least 49 party seats, and a party or coalition needs a majority to form a government.

Popular support for Labour and National is at historically low levels, with surveys showing voters have lost faith in the major parties to find solutions to the sluggish economy and to make the necessary changes to fix ageing infrastructure.


Christopher Luxon, leader of the National Party, greets supporters as he arrives at an election party in Auckland, New Zealand, yesterday. (**Reuters**)

If the National-led coalition loses its majority at the official count, either it or a left-leaning coalition would require the support of the centrist Opportunity Party, which looks likely to enter parliament for the first time.

Opportunity leader Qiulae Wong said she would look to negotiate with the party that secured the largest number of seats after the official results.

"We made that call based on the fact that we need a majority of seats in parliament in order to form a government. So that is what we will stick to," she told public broadcaster TVNZ.

New Zealand has emerged only slowly from a prolonged economic downturn, with growth subdued, household budgets strained and unemployment rising to 5.7% in the third quarter, its highest level in 11 years.

Healthcare and hospitals rank alongside the economy as leading concerns for voters, while housing affordability is still a major issue, even though house prices have broadly stabilised.

Indigenous Maori voters are also concerned about the current government's attempts to roll back historic policies meant to improve conditions for the community as well as efforts to reduce the influence of the country's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, on policy.

OPINION

How ueno bank breakdown led to Paraguay's political crisis

Paraguay's President Santiago Pena resigned last week after the collapse of ueno, a prominent commercial bank with ties to his government. Ueno, which spells its name with a lowercase "u", is a digital lender that grew rapidly from a niche local fintech company into a mid-sized Paraguayan bank. Launched in 2021, ueno had been compared to other fast-growing digital banks like Nubank, Monzo or Revolut.

As of June, the company said it had around 3mn customers -- in a country of 6.5mn people - and administered roughly $850mn in public funds, including money from state institutions and pension-related bodies.

The bank's rapid expansion made it one of Paraguay's most visible financial success stories. But in recent months it came under regulatory scrutiny over alleged excessive lending to companies linked to its controlling shareholder, Grupo Vazquez.

Paraguay's central bank intervened after determining that ueno had breached minimum solvency requirements, triggering a crisis that left millions of customers temporarily unable to access their accounts.

Pena, an economist who was elected in 2023, has faced political scrutiny because of his past business ties to Grupo Vazquez. Pena has said he was a Grupo Vazquez shareholder until March 2025 when he sold his stake.

Ueno says Pena never had a direct relationship with the bank as a shareholder or investor.

Opposition lawmakers have accused Pena of conflict of interest, misuse of pension funds and institutional cover-up. Pena, who has repeatedly rejected any suggestion of improper ties, has described the controversy as the political escalation of what began as a regulatory issue and has argued that it should be addressed through the courts.

Prosecutors said on Thursday he was among those being investigated over the bank's failure but he has not been taken in for questioning. They issued arrest warrants for eight ueno executives this week.

Questions have focused on whether regulators adequately supervised ueno as it expanded, particularly because the country's central bank chief, Carlos Carvallo, had previously been head of the digital lender. Carvallo resigned from the central bank on Tuesday after it put ueno into resolution, its strongest measure short of immediate liquidation.

The central bank has denied any conflict of interest, saying Carvallo recused himself from all decisions related to ueno. Nonetheless, pressure mounted after details of a regulatory probe became public, with lawmakers, banking industry representatives and opposition figures raising doubts as to whether there had been sufficient oversight.

The central bank said it was working to transfer ueno customer accounts to other financial institutions, a process that created strains across the banking system and contributed to outages at several banking apps. Customers are still unable to access their accounts within ueno. Some gathered outside ueno branches this week seeking access to their savings.

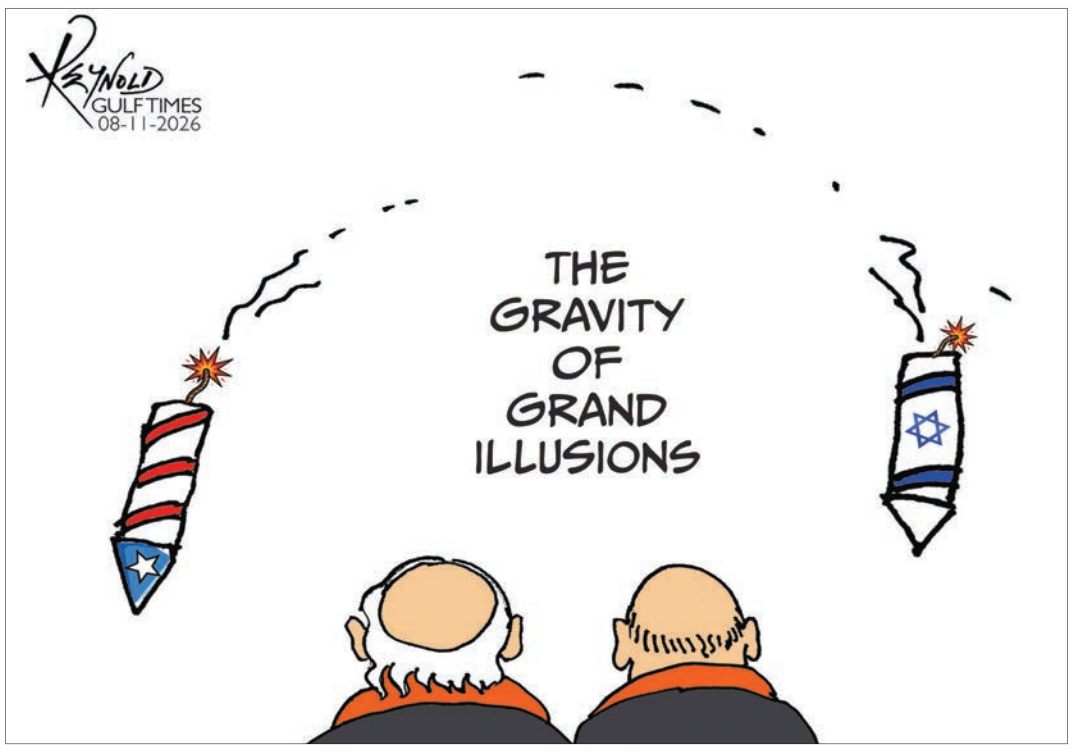
Ueno's mobile-first model helped attract new customers who were underserved by traditional banks and gave many Paraguayans easier access to digital payments, savings and other financial services.

Those who have been unable to access their accounts include pensioners who receive state benefits through ueno, prompting authorities to move quickly to guarantee deposits and safeguard public funds. Pena earlier this week approved legislation to help accelerate payments to depositors affected by the collapse of the bank.— Reuters

Royal attendance



Britain's William and Kate, Prince and Princess of Wales, attend the annual Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London, Britain, yesterday. The festival is an annual commemoration held to honour the service and sacrifices made by the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces community. (**Reuters**)



Antalya COP31 conference to address mounting climate change challenges

Antalya, Turkiye, is set to host the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) from tomorrow until Nov 20, bringing together government delegations, experts and representatives of international institutions and environmental organisations, as countries around the world grapple with burgeoning challenges stemming from rising temperatures, the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, mounting climate adaptation costs and tensions gripping global energy markets.

The ability of countries to finance climate adaptation and turn plans and strategies into concrete projects that protect people, the economy and natural resources is emerging as a foremost item on the conference agenda. As droughts, rising temperatures and floods become increasingly widespread, the gap is widening between what countries need to address these implications and the international financing they're able to secure.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Adaptation Gap Report 2026, developing countries will need approximately $305bn annually by 2035 to finance climate adaptation measures, while international public finance flows earmarked for this purpose stood at just $28.2bn to $31.7bn in 2024.

The adaptation gap has direct economic and developmental fallout for Turkiye, where drought and declining water resources are placing the agricultural sector under mounting pressure. Cities, meanwhile, need substantial investments to develop water supply and sanitation networks and bolster their capacity to withstand heat waves, floods and extreme climate events. The issue isn't merely about financing environmental projects; it's also about safeguarding food and water security, reducing economic losses and ensuring the continuity of industrial and agricultural activity.

Watershed moment

Turkiye's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that his country looks forward to the Antalya climate summit serving as a watershed moment in moving from climate pledges and commitments to actual implementation, through practical steps that can be financed and put into action, particularly in investment in clean energy and the development of energy infrastructure.

The world is going through an era marked by major challenges in the global energy sector, whether due to sharp fluctuations in energy prices, geopolitical tensions or disruptions affecting global supply chains, highlighted Bayraktar. He remarked that recent developments have proved that energy security is no longer merely an economic issue but has become an integral part of national security and the political and economic stability of countries.

The transition to clean energy mustn't come at the expense of security of supply or the ability to provide energy at affordable prices for citizens and the industrial sector, Bayraktar argued, explaining that the real challenge lies in striking a balance between three key objectives: ensuring energy security, maintaining the competitiveness of the economy and reducing carbon emissions.

Bayraktar went on to further illustrate that his country had announced its vision for the energy sector through 2040, placing the transition to electricity at the forefront of its priorities. The vision, he noted, targets renewable energy sources accounting for around 77% of total installed electricity generation capacity by that year, pointing out that achieving this goal depends not only on increasing electricity generation from solar and wind power,



but also requires substantial investments in transmission and distribution networks, energy storage technologies, improving energy efficiency and developing the infrastructure required to accommodate the growing output of renewable energy.

He said these steps are part of Turkiye's strategic objective of achieving net-zero emissions by 2053, in line with the vision announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This conference holds particular significance for climate finance, Bayraktar suggested, given that countries can't achieve the green transition simply by announcing targets. Rather, they need financial resources, investments, advanced technology and international partnerships.

He stressed that the gathering represents a platform for translating international commitments into tangible projects, helping accelerate investment in clean energy and strengthen cooperation between developed and developing countries.

Countries most exposed to the fallout from climate change aren't necessarily those best equipped to shoulder the costs of addressing it, as figures on drought and dwindling water resources lay bare the challenges of financing and implementing climate plans, Turkish economist and climate finance specialist Deniz Istikbal told QNA.

He added that concessional financing, long-term investments and public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly important, alongside the need to facilitate developing countries' access to international climate funds and institutions.

As for water and agriculture, the Turkish economist said the challenges are becoming quite pressing, particularly as mounting pressure on water resources and declining efficiency in some traditional irrigation systems exacerbate the problem.

He pointed out that investing in modern irrigation technologies, water reuse, improved water-resource management and the development of drought-resistant crops is no longer a development option that can be put off down the road, but a sine qua non for protecting agricultural production and bolstering food security.

He stressed that Turkiye's hosting of COP31 carries significance that goes substantially beyond its diplomatic and environmental dimensions, placing financing and implementation at the heart of international debate.

The challenge facing the conference, he outlined, isn't simply to produce new pledges, but to identify substantive mechanisms that ensure funding reaches the projects most in need of it, thus turning climate targets into measurable results on the ground. The conference is expected to serve as an important milestone in reviewing the progress made thus far in implementing international climate commitments, exploring ways to accelerate the transition to clean energy sources and strengthening countries' ability to contend with the effects of global warming.

The conference sessions will take place at the Antalya Expo Center in the Turkish city of Antalya, under an organizational arrangement based on sharing responsibilities between Turkiye and Australia. Turkiye will host and preside over the conference, under the leadership of Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, while Chris Bowen, Australia's Minister for Climate Change and Energy, will preside over the official negotiations.

The arrangement grew out of a diplomatic settlement between the two countries over hosting the conference, allowing Turkiye to manage its general proceedings while Australia leads the negotiating process among participating countries.

The World Leaders' Summit is scheduled for Nov 11 and 12 as part of the high-level political events accompanying the conference. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions will top the agenda, amid international calls to accelerate the implementation of commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Climate finance

Participating delegations are expected to discuss ways to expand the use of solar and wind power, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and strengthen investments in electricity grids and low-emissions technologies. These discussions take on added significance amid growing global energy demand and the need to strike a balance between security of supply, electricity costs and environmental objectives.

Climate finance is one of the foremost issues on the negotiating table and a major point of contention between industrialised and developing countries. Developing nations are calling for greater financial resources to help them develop clean-energy projects, protect infrastructure and contend with the fallout from floods, drought and rising sea levels.

Discussions are also continuing over mechanisms to finance loss and damage caused by climate change, particularly in countries facing substantial risks despite their relatively limited contribution to historical emissions.

The scale of financial commitments and the mechanisms for implementing them will be among the issues determining how much progress can be made in the negotiations.

The conference also holds particular significance for the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean, where countries face mounting challenges linked to rising temperatures, water scarcity and declining rainfall in some areas.

These changes are affecting agriculture, water, health and energy sectors, substantially increasing the need for long-term investments in infrastructure and climate adaptation. They also raise questions about the region's ability to expand renewable energy use, improve water-resource management and protect agricultural areas from drought and extreme heat waves.

The Antalya conference seeks to focus on turning previous climate commitments into practical policies and measures, amid continued criticism of the gap between announced international targets and actual implementation rates. These conferences began in Berlin in 1995 and have since been held annually, bringing together representatives of countries and governments, along with international organizations, civil society institutions and the private sector.

Overall, they serve as a platform for negotiations and decision-making on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, climate finance, adaptation to the effects of climate change and assisting the countries most severely affected. (**QNA**)

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Ahead of COP31, Turkiye eyes energy self-sufficiency by 2040 but no coal exit yet

AFP
Istanbul

Poised to host the COP31 climate summit, Turkiye has unveiled an ambitious $500bn roadmap for electrifying its economy and slashing imports, but no clear timeline for exiting coal.

Just days before the UN conference opens in the resort city of Antalya, Turkiye's energy minister launched its new National Energy Plan, seeking self-sufficiency by 2040 by ramping up renewables while also pushing new oil and gas investments.

As summit host, Turkiye's own energy policies have come under scrutiny especially as coal accounts for a third of its power, making it the leading generator of coal-fired electricity in Europe, according to energy think tank Ember. "When we reach 2040, we are going to reduce our emissions by 40% and this big change in electrification will make it happen," Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar told reporters during a presentation given on Thursday but made public on Friday.

But that would require "a big paradigm shift" in energy demand in Turkiye: "We need to change the demand from diesel or gasoline towards electricity," he said.

Under the plan — which marks the halfway point towards the country's 2053 net zero target — Turkiye aims to meet 36% of its energy needs from electricity, up from around 22% today.



A "#COP31" sign is displayed by a road near the entrance of the Antalya Expo Centre, venue of 2026COP31 in Antalya. (**AFP**)

Its installed power capacity — which stood at 123 GW in 2025 — will increase to 281 GW, with the renewables share rising from 63% to 77%. Within that, wind and solar capacity will grow nearly fourfold, from 45 GW to 175 GW.

The plan also seeks to wean Turkiye off its heavy dependence on energy imports. Bayraktar said Ankara has this year signed cooperation deals with oil majors such as Shell, Exxon, Chevron, ENI, Total and BP to accelerate its exploration both at home, as well as in Pakistan, Somalia and beyond.

"Our aim is to produce more oil and gas in Turkiye and abroad," he said, pointing to a "huge project list" and plans to double production at its Black Sea gas field to 7.5bn cubic metres in 2027.

The energy roadmap comes with a hefty price tag, requiring Turkiye to raise "half a trillion dollars in investment" by 2040, Bayraktar said — $210bn from five public sector companies and the rest through foreign investment.

"If the world is serious about carbon neutrality... to fight climate change and global warming, we need to find the money," he said.

Asked about a possible roadmap for exiting coal in light of its planned 40-percent emissions reduction, Bayraktar said Turkiye needed coal for its energy security.

"Why do we need coal? For security of supply. Equally important is that it's providing at least 30,000 to 40,000 people with employment," he said, pledging to outline plans for "a just transition on the coal side" at COP31.

Ultimately, an exit from coal would depend on how much Turkiye was able to ramp up its nuclear power production.

"Nuclear is the key area for us to replace coal," he said.


Paramedics help a victim in the historic centre of Krakow. (**AFP**)

5 people dead in shooting in Polish city of Krakow

Reuters
Warsaw

A gunman shot dead five people and wounded more than 10 yesterday in the main square of the southern Polish city of Krakow, police said, before they shot and arrested him.

The injured included two police officers who were hurt in a shootout with the attacker, who police said wore "military-style" clothes. Police said they started to receive reports at around 3pm that an assailant had opened fire from a car and shot randomly at people in the square.

Unverified footage shared on social media showed people fleeing the scene as shots and police sirens rang out. Other video showed people lying on blood-spattered paving stones and bystanders trying to resuscitate them. "I saw shots being fired from the driver's side window, and smoke was coming out. I ran to the police station in the main market square; when I burst inside, it was full of people hiding on the floor," a man who gave his name only as Konrad, and witnessed the shooting, told news website Interia.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X he was being kept informed about the incident in Krakow, Poland's second-largest city, which is a Unesco World Heritage Site.

"The man was wearing military-style attire," a police spokespersonsaid, adding: "During the arrest, officers used their weapons, but the man returned fire; as a result, two police officers are among the injured".

"The perpetrator was shot by police officers and is currently being transported to a hospital," police said on X.

Poland's President Karol Nawrocki said his thoughts were with the victims, those affected, and their families.

French hard-left candidate calls for a change

AFP
Le Bourget, France

The candidate of France's hard left in 2027 presidential elections, Jean-Luc Melenchon yesterday declared "everything must change" as he sought to rouse supporters for a campaign where he is set to play a key role.

Polls currently project that Melenchon, the leader of the France Unbowed (LFI) party, could be course for the first time to make the second-round vote next year against Marine Le Pen of the far right, although he would be soundly beaten in that decisive run-off.

But, addressing some 20,000 supporters at a mass rally in the Paris suburb of Le Bourget, the veteran firebrand, 75, made clear he was targeting the Elysee Palace to succeed President Emmanuel Macron.

"I have only one reasonable thing to propose to you. It is, in fact, quite moderate. Just one thing: everything must change," he said.

"We are paving the way for a major political shift in France," added Melenchon.

Russia ramps up strikes to pressure Kyiv at talks

AFP
Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday accused Russia of intensifying strikes across the country to put pressure on Kyiv at upcoming talks after an overnight barrage triggered power cuts as temperatures drop.

The latest strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure came days before the trilateral US-brokered meeting in Abu Dhabi scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday aimed at reviving stalled diplomatic efforts towards peace.

Ukraine's energy ministry said "a massive attack on a number of energy facilities" had plunged five regions into darkness and significantly hampered electricity transmission in Kyiv and surrounding region.

Zelensky said the timing of the aerial barrage showed that Russia had a "very particular view of diplomacy" as it struck ahead of "another joint effort with our partners to reinvigorate negotiations".

"By intensifying its attacks on Ukraine and our infrastructure at this very moment, Russia is trying to additionally lay the groundwork for putting pressure on Ukraine's position and that of its partners."

Moscow has battered Ukraine's energy grid and infrastructure throughout its four-and-a-half-year invasion and Kyiv was now bracing for another harsh winter as temperatures begin to hover around freezing. Zelensky also said Russia had throughout the night launched 172 drones and 36 ballistic missiles, among which, according to him, were KN-23 missiles manufactured and supplied by North Korea.


People stand at the site a Russian missile attack in Kyiv. (**Reuters**)

They hit "one of the key energy facilities that was damaged", Zelensky said.

Russia has turned to North Korea for support throughout invasion.

Earlier in the war, Pyongyang dispatched thousands of troops to help Russia fight back a Ukrainian counterattack in its western Kursk region.

The Russian defence ministry in a statement issued yesterday said it had struck "facilities belonging to the military-industrial complex, the energy sector, and transport infrastructure" in Kyiv and its surrounding region.

Zelensky urged the US to increase its flagging aid to Ukraine.

"Unfortunately, there is still a significant shortage of interceptors for Patriot systems, and the US is in the best position to help address it," Zelensky said.

The overnight strikes damaged energy facilities and a key bridge in Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said earlier yesterday, warning that the energy supply situation was "extremely difficult".

Consumers in the Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Kharkiv regions were left without power, the energy ministry said.

It did not say how many homes were affected.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Ukrainian officials are expected to sit down with Russian negotiators and US envoys for the first such direct talks in months.

Pakistani astronaut to join China's next space mission

AFP
Beijing

A Pakistani astronaut will become the first foreigner to visit China's space station when they join the country's next mission into orbit, Beijing's manned space agency said yesterday.

Pakistan and China are close diplomatic and strategic partners, and signed a deal in February 2025 setting up a Chinese government training programme for Pakistani astronauts. The Pakistani astronaut will take off with the Shenzhou-24 crew, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said on social media.

The mission is expected to take place by the end of the year. The Pakistani astronaut, a payload specialist, will join a short orbital flight before returning with the Shenzhou-23 spaceship, which docked at the Tiangong space station in May. The agency did not name the Pakistani crew member, but said in April that astronauts Muhammad Zeeshan Ali and Khurram Daud had been chosen to start training in China.

Beijing has invested heavily in its space programme in recent years — catching up with its main rival the US — and aims to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030.

Pakistan is a natural partner, given the countries often tout their decades-long, "all-weather" friendship.

Under the 2025 deal, following training in China, the Pakistani astronauts will carry out short-term missions with Chinese counterparts over the "next few years", Beijing's state news agency Xinhua reported at the time.

Son of Iran's ousted shah takes controversial prize

AFP
Frankfurt

The son of the ousted shah of Iran yesterday received a "Freedom Prize" in Frankfurt awarded to the Iranian people in a ceremony that critics said was illegitimate.

Some 25,000 demonstrators, many chanting support and waving pre-revolutionary Iranian flags, greeted Reza Pahlavi as he turned up in the German city to be handed the honour, according to a police estimate.

The prize was awarded by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, an activist group close to Germany's liberal FDP party.

Iran "is a country not waiting to be taught democracy, this is a country being prevented from practising it", Pahlavi said at St Paul's Church, famous for hosting Germany's first-ever elected parliament in 1848-1849.

"A people ready to die for the right to vote is willing to exercise the right to vote," he added to applause.

Anti-government protests broke out at the end of last year in Iran and were suppressed in a January crackdown by security forces, which rights groups say killed tens of thousands.

Pahlavi's voice quivered as he spoke of the relatives of those killed, some of whom were present in the hall.

"You could not have chosen a people who better understand the meaning of the word 'freedom'," he told the foundation.

Pahlavi taking receipt of the prize was not welcomed by all, despite the visible support he enjoyed on the streets of Frankfurt.

Pahlavi's father, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was the last shah of Iran, an autocratic ruler who fled into exile in 1979 ahead of a broad revolution that overthrew the monarchy and later became consolidated under the clerical rule.

Others criticise Pahlavi for his vocal support for Israel and accuse him of failing to distance himself sufficiently from his father's autocratic rule.

About 200 prisoners held in Iran signed a letter protesting Pahlavi's receipt of the prize, according to Sahar Sanaie, spokeswoman for the Society for German-Iranians in the state of Hesse, considering him a symbol of a "bygone dictatorship".

France probes airline threats link to 'foreign powers'

French prosecutors have opened a probe into bogus bomb threats targeting dozens of commercial flights in Europe over the past week, notably including whether foreign powers could be involved.
The investigation aims to find "the authors of the emails who disseminated this false information... and to determine any potential links they may have to foreign powers", the office of the Paris prosecutor told AFP. The French government, for its part, has also said that the origin of the threats was being investigated. (**AFP**)

New mass protests in France as police thwart banned rally

AFP
Paris

Thousands of people protested across France yesterday in a new show of anger against the government with Paris police moving to prevent an unauthorised gathering near the president's Elysee Palace office and residence.

The protests mark the fourth weekend in a row of demonstrations, which have erupted as the country tilts towards presidential elections in five months' time in which the far right sees its best chance yet to win power.

Authorities expected up to 170,000 people to protest nationwide, including 60,000 in Paris. But the interior ministry counted 7,000 people protesting early afternoon nationwide, down on the same time last week and indicating a downward trend in participation, an official told AFP.

The demonstrations come after mass protests by unions on Thursday accompanied by strikes, with teaching unions vowing more walk-outs next week.


Riot police officers during a demonstration in Paris. (**Reuters**)

Some 70,000 members of the security forces were deployed yesterday, ready to move in quickly after mass protests on October 17 degenerated into the worst riots seen in France in years.

Unions staged a march along a traditional route, from the Place de la Republique in central Paris to Place de la Nation in the east of the city.

But the Yellow Vests movement — a group whose protests shook Emmanuel Macron in the early years of his presidency almost a decade ago — called for a rival demonstration at the Place de la Concorde in central Paris, a stone's throw from the president's Elysee Palace and the lower house of parliament.

This action has been banned by the authorities, and yesterday a large police presence prevented protesters from getting close. Some 100 people who arrived were surrounded by police and one of the movement's coordinators, Benjamin Ball, and its spokeswoman, Azelma Sigaux, were apprehended by police, an AFP reporter said.

In the southeastern city of Lyon, police fired tear gas to disperse several hundred people in the city centre blocking a road during an unauthorised gathering. "The risk is exactly the same as on previous Saturdays," said Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, calling on authorities "not to lower their guard".

The wave of demonstrations was sparked by a movement in late September by high school students angered by conditions at their establishments. These teens, joined by university students, remain at the heart of the protests.

"Today is a date that helps keep the pressure on," said Sabine Kharbach, spokeswoman of the Student Union. "Many young people are mobilising because the government's responses remain unsatisfactory."

The police response has faced criticism for being heavy-handed, with dozens of internal investigations launched into allegations of brutality against demonstrators.

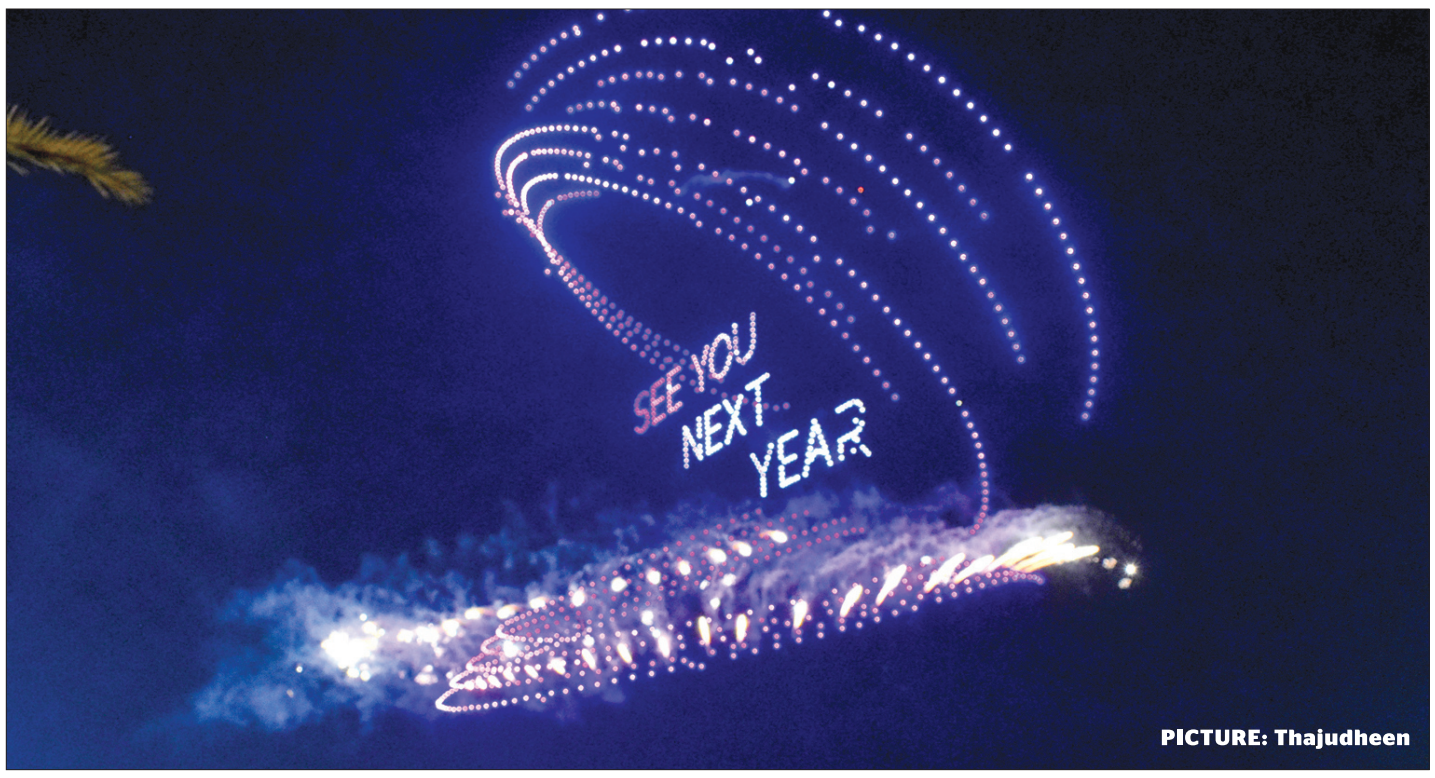
After several instances of apparent police brutality against AFP reporters covering the protests, the international news agency on Friday urged protection for its journalists.

Local businesses are also feeling the pain. "So this can't go on, otherwise I think it will be a disaster before long," said Paris shop manager Jean Emile Moulinier, whose store is around the main protest route and says hardly any customers brave security barricades on protest weekends.

Shop windows of stores in Paris and other cities were again barricaded with wooden shutters and often closed for the day to prevent potential ransacking.

The government is grappling with ways to find solutions but is constrained by France's gigantic debt pile which is already spooking markets. Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu is due to meet unions and employer federation representatives on Monday.

QATAR



PICTURE: Thajudheen


PICTURE: Thajudheen

Spectacular finale for Boat Show

The event drives marine business with multiple agreements



Qatar Boat Show reinforced its role as a commercial platform for the marine industry, with agreements spanning waterfront transport services, regional boat distribution and international market representation. The event held between Nov 4-7, saw some spectacular fireworks on its closing day. The signings brought together port operators, Qatari manufacturers and commercial partners, demonstrating the show's role in supporting business development both locally and abroad.

Old Doha Port and All Marine for Marine Services signed a three-year agreement for the operation and management of Mina Link's shuttle boat services. The agreement was signed by Ali Abdulrahman al-Abdulla, Director of Marine Operations at Old Doha Port, and Captain Horace El Khazen, Operations Manager of All Marine for Marine Services. Offering a scenic round-trip ride between the Containers Yard and the Mina District within Old Doha Port, Mina Link gives visitors an enjoyable way to explore the destination from the water. The agreement covers shuttle boats featuring designs inspired by Qatar's maritime heritage, enhancing connectivity across the port while enriching the visitor experience.



Alongside the development of marine services locally, signings during Qatar Boat Show opened opportunities for local manufacturers to reach customers overseas. Doha Craft appointed Al Boom Marine Company as its official agent in Kuwait, strengthening its presence in the market and introducing its boats to a wider audience of boating and marine enthusiasts. The partnership provides a foundation for further business cooperation between the two companies.



The appointment comes as GCC participation at Qatar Boat Show has increased by 30% compared with the previous edition, with some companies participating for the first time. This year's show also features its largest representation of GCC boat builders, providing a key opportunity for regional manufacturers and distributors to establish commercial relationships.

A memorandum of understanding was also signed for the representation of Halul Boats in the Republic of Maldives, bringing together Halul Boats and Aqua Speed. Representatives during the signing ceremony included Sheikh Khalifa bin Saud al-Thani, Chairman of Aqua Speed; Fadi al-Yousfi, Managing Director of Aqua Speed; Abdulla Riyaz, Aqua Speed's local partner in the Maldives; Ahmed al-Hitmi, Chairman of Halul Boats; and Abdul Aziz al-Haram, General Manager of Halul Boats.

Halul Boats showcased four boats at this year's event, connecting its on-water product presence with the development of overseas business opportunities. Its agreement, alongside Doha Craft's Kuwait appointment, illustrates how participation in Qatar Boat Show can support Qatari manufacturers' ambitions beyond the domestic market.

Together, the signings demonstrate the range of business opportunities supported by the show, from agreements that enhance Qatar's waterfront offering to partnerships that extend the reach of its boat-building industry. (QNA)

Photographer documents everyday signs as markers of cultural identity

Growing up in multicultural Qatar shapes Raja Aderdor's perspective on people, places and shared experiences

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Photographer Raja Aderdor is documenting everyday signs, handwritten messages and markings in public spaces to capture how communities express themselves and communicate across different cities and countries.

The Qatar-based visual storyteller said ordinary signs, from religious phrases and taxi stickers to warnings and shop signs, offer revealing insights into cultural identity, social behaviour and how people establish their presence in shared spaces.

Her project, Signs: Seen, Yet Unseen (2025–2026), features photographs taken across Qatar and Morocco, highlighting how seemingly ordinary visual messages reflect the cultures that produce them.

A pedestrian crossing figure wearing a Qatari thobe, hand-painted shop signs in Marrakech and illustrated rental advertisements in Merzouga, she explained, communicate more than their immediate messages, carrying traces of identity, faith, humour, authority, labour and belonging.

"Signs have always caught my attention. Whether it is a religious sign placed beside a road or words written on walls to claim a parking space or a piece of land, I have always been interested in how people represent these things and how differently they do so across cities and countries," Aderdor said.

She pointed out that colours, language and presentation of such messages vary from one place to another, even when they serve the same purpose. A parking notice in Morocco, for instance, may be worded and presented differently from one in Qatar, reflecting distinct ways of communicating.

Aderdor is also interested in preserving these visual expressions because many are temporary. Messages disappear when walls are repainted, or public spaces change, taking with them small but telling details of everyday life.

Growing up in Qatar, where people from diverse cultural backgrounds live and interact, has shaped her perspective and the stories she chooses to tell. Exposure to different cultures through school and work, she said, helped her become more open to the world and heightened her awareness of everyday experiences.

"Being surrounded by different cultures is a beautiful thing. It has shaped my personality and made me more open to noticing things around me," she said. "It also influences my work by making sure that everyone is considered and that different experiences are represented accurately."

Aderdor also sees the growth of Qatar's cultural institutions and creative platforms as an important development for artists, giving them greater opportunities to pursue their work and build sustainable practices.

She said the creative sector had changed significantly over the past three to four years, with institutions such as Qatar Museums and Tasweer providing support, resources and spaces that allow artists to devote more time to developing their projects.



Raja Aderdor in front of her works from 'Signs: Seen, Yet Unseen' at Tasweer's exhibition in Bayt Al Wakrah.

"In the past, my creative projects were usually driven by individual effort or work with friends. Now, with more institutional support and access to studio spaces, I feel encouraged to give my creative practice the time and energy I have wanted to dedicate to it for years," she said.

She added that continued investment in creative spaces and opportunities would help bridge the gap between individual artists and institutions, strengthening the wider creative ecosystem.

On the growing influence of artificial intelligence in image-making, Aderdor views AI-generated imagery as a distinct form of artistic expression, with its own creative possibilities and purpose alongside documentary photography.

While photography captures what exists in the real world, AI allows creators to construct images and visualise ideas, with both approaches serving different purposes in communicating an artistic vision.

Aderdor said she regularly uses AI tools for practical tasks and brainstorming but prefers not to incorporate them into her personal photographs.

"I use AI all the time, but not in my pictures. I like to keep my photographs natural and avoid too much editing," she said. "For making things easier and helping me brainstorm new ideas, it is absolutely useful."

Her work is featured in As the Image Unfolds – The Language of Athar, currently on view at Bayt Al Wakrah until December 15.

Presented by Tasweer, the exhibition features new works by Aderdor, Mohammed Fakhroo and Ghada al-Mawlawi, bringing together perspectives on memory, belonging and the environments people inhabit. It marks the culmination of Tasweer's five-month artist residency programme, which gave participants time and space to research, experiment and develop their photographic practices.

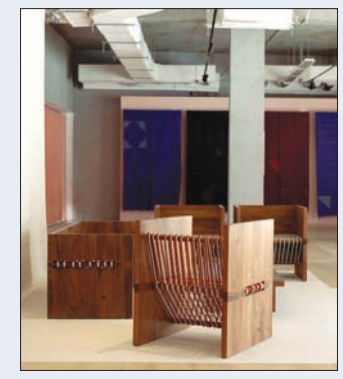
Taking its title from the Arabic word athar, meaning traces or imprints, the exhibition explores how images can preserve fragments of identity and experience.

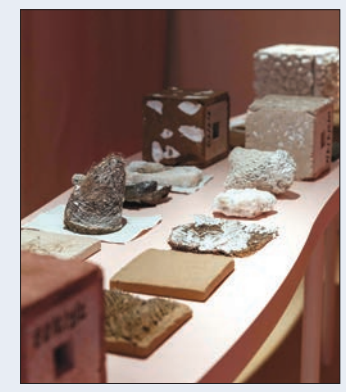
Aderdor's contribution invites audiences to look more closely at familiar surroundings and consider what everyday signs reveal about the people and cultures behind them.

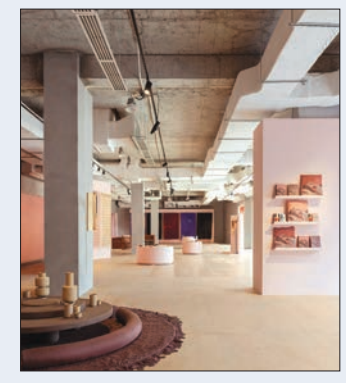
Irthi looks to turn traditional Gulf craft into contemporary design industry

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter









Traditional Emirati crafts are being reimagined for contemporary design in Doha, as Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council uses its second Design Doha Biennial participation to explore regional collaboration and future manufacturing.

The initiative goes beyond showcasing traditional craftsmanship, with Irthi seeking to build local production capabilities, expand opportunities for artisans and develop a new generation of designers who can translate cultural knowledge into contemporary applications.

Speaking to Gulf Times on the sidelines of Design Doha Biennial 2026, Reem Saif al-Mazroui, curator at Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council, said the second edition of Design Labs was built on years of research into traditional materials, techniques and craft knowledge, with the ambition of taking these practices into new areas of design.

"For the Design Labs II, the basic foundation was the material archive that Irthi was able to develop and enhance during the past six years. We were able in this edition to pull up the full archive of research, including dyeing techniques, different styles of weaving and different mediums," she said.

The programme, developed as a residency initiative in Sharjah over the past three years, brought together 10 designers and artisans to explore how traditional craftsmanship could inform contemporary design. Five collections from the programme are being presented in Doha, featuring applications across textiles, furniture, concrete and architectural elements.

Al-Mazroui said the exhibition was also an important introduction to a collection being developed for the planned Irthi Museum, which is expected to open in 2029.

"Since this collection is also built and meant to be for Irthi Museum, which will be launched in 2029, we find Doha Design Biennial and Qatar to be the perfect introduction for this collection," she said.

The exhibition, hosted at Fereej Al Asmakh, reflects a wider effort to move traditional crafts beyond their conventional applications and demonstrate their potential in contemporary creative industries.

Al-Mazroui said the programme's approach was rooted in the belief that craft knowledge could contribute to the development of new products and design concepts rather than simply serve as a decorative element.

She highlighted the importance of bringing artisans and designers together, noting that the second edition had expanded its network beyond female artisans in Sharjah to include craft-based families and international practitioners.

Among the collaborations were works involving artisans from Bahrain, Lebanon, Spain and Mexico, bringing together different techniques and material expertise.

"We went beyond our only artisans, females that we have in Sharjah. We worked with family-based artisans... a full family of the sons, the grandsons, the fathers and the mothers," she said.

She added that the initiative had also involved woodworkers in Spain and Mexico, as well as artisans in Lebanon who worked on seating cushions through stitching and weaving techniques.

For Al-Mazroui, these collaborations are not simply about producing individual collections but about transferring knowledge and developing the skills needed to sustain craftsmanship within the region.

"We are always looking forward to bring this expertise to Sharjah to have our own manufacturers, to have our own future generation of artisans and designers and makers who are able to execute this particular craft or technique," she said.

She said the long-term ambition for Irthi was to develop its own manufacturing facilities and skilled workforce, enabling the council to produce materials and designs locally in Sharjah and across the UAE.

Describing Qatar as a natural platform for the exhibition, al-Mazroui said the two countries shared cultural connections and a common interest in presenting heritage through contemporary interpretations.

She added that the wider goal was to strengthen the Gulf's creative ecosystem by supporting regional talent and ensuring that craftspeople could earn a sustainable living from their skills.